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Church is confronted with what 'acceptance' of homosexuals means

Alison de Groot

TORONTO — Dealing with the sensitive issue of homosexuality has not, historically, been one of the strengths of the Christian Reformed denomination, the church's synodical report on the subject admits. But for First Christian Reformed Church (CRC), Toronto, which has some members who have admitted to being homosexual, the issue cannot be ignored.

One member of First CRC, also known as the Taunton Road Church, put it this way: "We are the downtown church in Toronto, a diverse city, and we see that the church doors had better be open — and they are." But coming to terms with homosexuality was not just out of necessity for this church, it was also out of faithfulness to the spirit of the CRC's 1973 report on homosexuality which in essence says the church much "accept the sinner but not the sin."

For First CRC, that 1973 report meant more than just a statement of its denomination's position regarding practicing homosexuals. It also contained a mandate to "recognize that their homosexual members are fellow-servants of Christ, who are to be given opportunity to render within the offices and structures of the congregation the same service that is expected from heterosexuals."

This was the mandate First CRC sought to fulfil when, last fall, it gave its support to a group called AWARE, for As We Are.

Although First Church recognized the mandate in the 1973 synodical report, it also stood by the conclusions made by that report in a letter addressed to AWARE giving its initial support: "We feel [the report] serves to declare our communal understanding as honestly and as concisely as possible,"

Photo: C.C. files

First CRC on Taunton Road in Toronto where the group AWARE meets. The group's claim that it has the church's blessing is causing concern.

read the letter.

Forum for discussion

AWARE was started in 1983 in response to the concerns of a gay member of First CRC who disagreed with the denomination's decision censuring the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands for moving towards full acceptance of the lifestyle of practicing homosexuals. The support group met for its first six seasons in people's homes until it was recently given support by First CRC. Now meetings are held in the church building.

"We knew that we needed a forum for discussion for homosexuals within the church and that that forum needed to be open and without hypocrisy," says Postumus. "We do not control what is discussed within the group, we are allowing them the freedom to discuss the specific, real and difficult subjects that need to be discussed."

This season's list of topics include: "The pain of coming out," "How to celebrate family-type events,"

See **NEED** -- p. 2.

Harmful dioxins in breast milk, everything we eat, says study

Marian Van Til

OTTAWA — Is nothing safe anymore? It appears not: a joint federal government/province of Ontario study released earlier this month reports that breast-fed babies are drinking toxins along with their mothers' milk.

Photo: C.C. files

The wonderful bond developed between breast-fed babies and their mothers may have a down side: a recent study showed alarmingly high dioxin levels in mothers' milk — but the benefits at this point still outweigh possible hazards.

The study concludes that breast-fed babies are ingesting dioxins and furans at levels 16.5 times higher than the federal standard. Adult Canadians *daily* take in the two chemicals at a rate of 2-4.2 picograms per kilogram of body weight, almost totally through food they consume. Breastfed babies ingest the chemicals at a daily rate of 165 picograms. Ten picograms per kilogram of body weight is the "safe" limit that has been set by the federal government.

Dioxins and furans, chemically related to each other, are some of the most toxic substances known, with long-term exposure capable of causing reproductive problems, cancer and suppression of the immune system. The main sources of dioxins are municipal incinerators, wood preservatives and pulp and paper mills using chlorine bleach. Municipal incinerators produce furans.

The meaning of the study is being debated. One government chemist says that because babies drink breast milk for a relatively short time, there may be no ill effects at all. Health Ministry chemical analyst Bev Houston insists that the amount of dioxins and furans human beings normally ingest in a lifetime is far below the level that would significantly affect one's health.

Benefits still outweigh risks

The study notes that the known positive benefits of breastfeeding still outweigh the possible risks. However, it asserts, "Further contamination of human breast milk may lead to significant and unacceptable exposure."

The question remains whether alternative diets for infants would be any better than breast milk: the study found that virtually all kinds of food available in Canada — beef, milk, pork, poultry, eggs, fruit, vegetables, grains and fish — contain dioxins. Such food is still sold even though it is legally contaminated according to government standards. If government standards were actually enforced, there wouldn't be much left to sell or buy, notes Houston. And it doesn't seem to matter very much where you live or what you eat; it's impossible in our world to avoid daily ingesting some level of dioxins.

"What kind of regulations do we need to ensure that public health is protected yet not get ourselves into a situation where ... if you did take action, you'd wipe out the food supply?" Houston asks rhetorically.

Take action

But we must do more than ask rhetorical questions or throw up our hands in despair, says the international environmental group Greenpeace. The government wants to increase allowable dioxin levels but Greenpeace asserts that "the program must aim at zero discharge."

"Greenpeace is actively campaigning to block this regulatory change and force the government to implement a dioxin elimination program," says the group in a recent article entitled "Dioxins and Your Health."

Greenpeace provides a wealth of information and statistics which point out the seriousness of the problem. They then suggest steps that anyone can take to address the problem:

- "Contact your Member of Parliament.
- "Write to Robert de Cotret, [federal] Minister of the Environment, and Perrin Beatty, Minister for Health and Welfare Canada.
- "Join a citizens' group in your area opposed to waste incineration.
- "Organize your friends, co-workers and neighbours to put collective pressure on the government.
- "Use your power as a consumer: don't buy PVC-based plastic products, containers or wrappings. Keep demanding chlorine-free or unbleached paper products. If you are not sure of the ingredients, ask before you buy."

In this issue:

British Christian statesman and humourist Malcolm Muggeridge's journey here is over ..... p. 7
We Christians are often not very adept at handling anger. Randall Johnson gives some advice on "managing our anger" ... pp. 10-11
Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff describes *shalom* and justice in the context of men and women as partners in the church ..... pp. 12-13

Thinkbit:

Happiness lies in our abilit[y]
everything that happ[ens] either enjoy it gr[eatly] it patiently.
Robert F[ulghum]

dale Road
Unit 4
. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A1

Need for ministry for gays accepted but direction questioned by church

... continued from page 1.

"Healthy sex" and "The Bible and homosexuality."

But Postumus adds that "if the group means to tie the position of accepting the lifestyle of practicing homosexuals or the application of a Christian marriage to homosexual partnerships as justifiable to God, to the position of this church, then that is wrong; our connection is not as such." Postumus says the church will not "play the ostrich game and hide our heads from reality," but the congregation will stand by its synod's report on this issue.

"People should not feel we are moving from that," he asserts.

Painful

Tim Schules and his wife Rita are members of the group and according to Tim, "The real struggle is, in the context of brokenness, how do gays and lesbians participate in the redemption of Christ?"

Once you've recognized the reality of homosexuality, how do you live as Christians with that reality? That's the question Tim and Rita want to answer and that's why they became members of AWARE, according to Tim. They joined the group one year ago after the "extremely painful experience" of Rita's brother revealing his homosexuality. Both were from a Christian Reformed background from Alberta. They are now members of an Anglican Church in Toronto.

The Schules' experience was localized and they decided they wanted to deal with the issue in a larger, more general context as well. Tim says this group is an effort to recognize "our common humanity; we're trying to find ways of empowering each other, we're all struggling with a specific brokenness or imperfection in our own sexuality." As members, the Schules' also feel they offer a symbolic, visible sign of heterosexual support.

Dr. Henk Hart, a First Church member and spokesperson for and member of AWARE, says the group has among its aims more than just mutual support. It also tries to promote better understanding between heterosexuals and homosexuals — announcements in First Church's bulletin invite members to meetings, to "reach out" to parents and other relatives or friends of gays and lesbians, to establish ties with other similar groups in different denominations and to [illegible] climate of acceptance [illegible]ians in the

acceptance has given rise to some concern and that concern is centred around the definition of "acceptance."

In a recent article in *Faith Today*, the bi-weekly magazine of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Hart, speaking on behalf of AWARE, said the group believed "monogamous homosexual relationships can be sanctioned by God." The article, "Coming out of the closet and staying in the church" (Nov./Dec. '90), had already identified AWARE as a group that had the "blessing" of First CRC.

When asked, Tim Schules agreed there exists a variety of opinions regarding the status of homosexuality and the Bible within the group itself. Many members agree that homosexuality is the result of a broken, sinful world; however, they feel they can live out their sexuality as best they can and "learn how to participate in Christ's redemption in that context." According to Tim, another faction would argue that homosexuality is a normal, acceptable alternative sexuality. Those with both views within the group are "struggling to deal with, understand and come to terms with their sexuality," asserts Tim.

Rick Ruyter, a Presbyterian minister, is a family therapist scheduled to speak to AWARE in January about "healthy sex." He insists that homosexuality is an acceptable alternative sexuality. "The Bible talks about sexuality, but lately because of changes in the church, the church has taken over the instruction of sexuality from the Bible."

Ruyter asserts, "Homosexuals are not sick. They are legitimate, healthy people." Ruyter says the church needs to let gay men and lesbian women know they are not alone and believes there is a need to lobby the church to support a change in attitude.

'Misleading'

First CRC's minister, Rev. John Rottman, responded to the *Faith Today* article quoting Hart with a letter to the editor of the magazine. In the letter, Rottman called the article "misleading." Rottman explains that AWARE was told it could "claim our support on the basis of our position as explored and explained in our synod's 1973 report on homosexuality."

In Rottman's letter to *Faith Today* he writes that the reference to synod's position in his letter to AWARE was "intended to make clear to them and to the Christian community that we could not be construed as meaning to promote homosexual relationships."

Wietse Posthumus says, "We've gone a step further than most churches. We will continue to act on the call to welcome these members into the CRC and love them and offer them full participation in the church." Postumus says the congregation hopes that "by meeting with us in church where we minister the Word of God to them, their Christianity will guide them in their ministry to themselves."

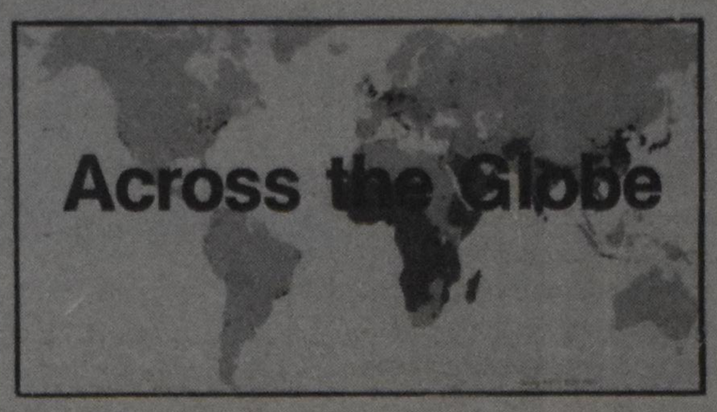
Rottman concluded his letter by saying: "Our church deeply laments any and every sinful exclusion of homosexuals, but neither are we able to condone sinful behaviour in our effort to be inclusive."

Rev. John Van Steempvoort, stated clerk of Classis Toronto, says although classis has no official connection to AWARE, the group has come to the attention of classis through an article in *Link*, a newsletter for the churches of Classis Toronto. Postumus admitted that "the time may be coming when First Church's council will have to re-evaluate the group and its ties to the church."

CORRECTION:

In Jake Kuiken's November 9 column "Home Missions — a Mission in Search of a Home?" a crucial decimal point was omitted from this sentence, which should read:

"Compared to the historical growth rate of **.68 per cent** [not 68 per cent] during the period of 1967-87, the HMB plan was a proposal for an incremental growth rate of 1.46 per cent for the period 1988-99."



The break-up of Yugoslavia

David T. Koyzis

Considering the current difficulties in Yugoslavia it is little wonder that we use the word "Balkanization" to describe a general process of national disintegration. The sudden and unexpected revival of the ancient Balkan question has once more brought the "tinderbox of Europe" to the point of combustion.

Yugoslavia probably ought never to have been invented. It was created some 70 years ago out of the remnants of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and a much smaller Serbian kingdom. Although the peoples in that region were quite different culturally and religiously, they were nevertheless thrown together into something called Yugoslavia — literally the land of the "South Slavs."

The originators of this rather unfortunate conglomeration ignored the fact that the Roman Catholic Slovenes and Croats were Western-oriented and had longstanding ties to Italy and Austria, while the Eastern Orthodox Serbs, Macedonians and Montenegrans had lived for centuries under Turkish rule and had developed a rather different political culture from their linguistic cousins in the north. Nor was the presence of millions of Muslim Albanians and Bosnians taken into account.

Teetering dominoes

For 40 years after the Second World War Yugoslavia was held together by the strong arm of communist leader Josip Broz Tito. Under his rule the country maintained a precarious internal stability and a carefully staked-out position of nonalignment between East and West. But once Tito was gone and the threat of superpower intervention had diminished, there was little to hold the country together. Indeed, with the recent advent of democracy in many of the Yugoslav republics, the federation as a whole looks set to fall apart in short order.

Yugoslavia is nominally a federal state similar in many ways to the Soviet Union. It consists of six republics and one autonomous province whose borders run roughly along ethnic lines. But these borders could never be precisely drawn simply because the various ethnic groups do not all live in geographically compact areas. Consequently, Croats live amongst the Serbs, Albanians amongst the Macedonians, and Bosnian Muslims amongst the Serbs and Croats. This is where the trouble lies.

Set for chronic civil strife?

If, say, Croatia decides to go it alone, where does that leave the numerous Serbs and Bosnian Muslims scattered throughout that republic who would prefer to maintain the status quo? The break-up of Yugoslavia will probably not be peaceful and could be accompanied by considerable inter-ethnic violence. Fortunately, conflict here is not likely to lead to another world war since it is no longer a theatre for great-power ambitions. Yet it could become a region of chronic civil strife similar to Lebanon.

One of the more dangerous legacies of the era of romantic nationalism is the now commonly-held belief in national self-determination. A corollary of this belief is the conviction that every "nation" (however this be defined) must be sovereign and must express itself politically in the form of a separate state. Not only is this idea dangerous and destabilizing, but it also conflicts at a basic level with the state's normative task.

In one sense it matters little whether Yugoslavia stays together or falls apart. But it does matter that whatever political communities take its place do justice to all citizens and communities within their respective territories. In other words, the mere fact that a Croatian state may come into being cannot in any way absolve its governing authorities of the divine obligation to treat equitably Serbians and other minorities living in Croatia.

The danger of tying citizenship to membership in a particular ethnic or religious group is that it produces a double standard of justice and hence the threat of majoritarian tyranny.

David T. Koyzis is assistant professor of political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl

Monsieur's macho march into the Persian Gulf conflict is costing loads of money. Rather than adding to the deficit the government wants to dig these dollars out of operative budgets. The squeeze will be felt across the bureaucracy. Monsieur appointed six new deputy ministers, and you can be sure that these people will severely slow down the bureaucratic gravy train. It was also remarkable that not one of the six deputy ministers appointed by a cabinet order went to school with Monsieur, practised law with him, helped him get elected or worked for the Progressive Conservative party. Frank Howard makes that observation in *The Ottawa Citizen*.

★ ★ ★

That paper is known to have a lot of inside dope on Hill happenings. It knows for instance that the Minister of External Affairs, Joe Clark, owes his own department $4558 in advances which have not been spent. The Auditor General Ken Dye is a bit miffed about all these advances at External Affairs. After all he said, they add up to the tidy little sum of $25 million, which is a lot of bread.

★ ★ ★

And for the people who still doubt that we are in a recession comes the news that beer sales have slumped. So there! I hope that this fact does not result in an increase of beer ads on T.V.

★ ★ ★

The Canadian Human Rights Commission, not known for its timidity in any case, delivered a scathing report on the government's handling of the Oka affair specifically and on the department of Indian Affairs generally. Indian Affairs' policies are outdated, reflecting 19th century paternalism, and the whole Indian Act should be scrapped, so says the commission.

★ ★ ★

The 11-member Spicer commission mandated by Monsieur to find out what ordinary Canadians want for the future of this country held its first meeting. There was a lot of talk about the entirely new and improved process of gathering information, but how that is to be done was not announced. Probably because neither Spicer or the committee members had at that time any idea about the method to be followed.

★ ★ ★

The federal NDP caucus which used to be as English as the legislature is lily-white, now has a member who insists on speaking French. It is Phil Edmonston, the only Quebec NDP MP who started this habit to call attention to the fact that the NDP is an all-Canadian party. Fortunately for his colleagues, translation is available.

★ ★ ★

High oil prices contributed to a rather sharp rise in the rate of inflation, but the good news was that oil exports helped to increase Canada's trade surplus. Oil prices also had a lot to do with the planned construction of the Trans Canada pipe line. Alberta will be able to supply gas to the New England states, and construction of the pipe line to that market will create many jobs. Champagne and caviar all around in Calgary's Petroleum Club!

★ ★ ★

And then there was conversation at the doctor's office. "Do you sleep well?" asked the doctor. To which the patient answered: "So, so, doctor. At night I sleep really well, in the morning it is not too bad, but in the afternoon I hardly close my eyes." And there was a discussion between a landlord and his tenant. The tenant said: "The roof leaks, water comes in through the windows and there are puddles on the floor. How long must I put up with this?" The landlord answered: "Am I the weatherman?"

★ ★ ★

Monsieur was busy adding points to his frequent flyer account. He joined 33 leaders (all European countries except Albania, plus Canada and the United States) at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. That meeting took place in Paris. The conference decided to send a whole lot of weaponry to the junkyard where it belongs anyway. The American delegation also used the meeting to drum up support for eventual military action in the Iraq conflict. Apart from Joe Clark who, following the leader, really backed up Washington's tough line, most Europeans urged caution and encouraged diplomatic solutions. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was especially emphatic about the necessity for delaying military action. The Russians, with the prospect of famine in their country, are also not too eager to spend money on munitions rather than bread and butter. Monsieur has promised Gorbachev a care package of meat, wheat and other foodstuffs worth millions of dollars. The Soviet Union also has $850 million left on its credit line with the Canadian Wheat Board. The trouble is that the Soviet infrastructure is collapsing. Agricultural products do not reach the cities because of lack of transportation facilities. Whatever gets sent on its way is at least halved by the greedy hands of corrupt officials.

★ ★ ★

The whole European scene will change now that Mrs. Thatcher will go into retirement. Her iron-lady-policies got a bit rusty in the new Europe.

★ ★ ★

With the U.S.S.R's food shortages getting all this world attention it is not to be forgotten that Ethiopia has appealed to the world community for food. Stricken by drought, Ethiopia's neighbouring country, Sudan, is also threatened with famine.

★ ★ ★

President Bush was with the troops in Saudi Arabia to celebrate Thanksgiving. For some perverse reason our Yankee friends persist in observing that event on the wrong day. Every Canadian knows that Thanksgiving falls on the second Monday of October.

★ ★ ★

The Dutch guilder is rising to dizzying heights these days in relation to American and Canadian currency. It will cost you 70 Canadian cents to buy a guilder which means that a cup of coffee over there will require the outlay of a little more than two dollars, and no free fill up for the second cup either. Better stay at home, unless of course you can freeload with your ant in Zierikzee.

★ ★ ★

The French have promised not to interfere in the proceedings of the Belanger-Campeau commission. No "Vive Quebec Libre" from Paris this time around. There is already sufficient Quebec libre sentiment in the commission anyway.

★ ★ ★

The world's oldest person celebrated her 116th birthday in Florida. She spent 75 of her years in a state hospital, a fact that seems to bear out the truth of a statement I saw years ago in the military hospital in Djakarta, which was then Batavia. The sign read: "Be smart, get crazy."

★ ★ ★

George Gamester, who collects wise cracks for the *Toronto Star*, saw this sign: "When the Going Gets Tough ... I'm Outa Here!" And one other one: "It's Lonely At The Top — But You Eat A Lot Better!"

Carl Tuyl is the Christian Reformed Church's chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada.

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Editor (on sabbatical):
Bert Witvoet

General Manager:
Stan de Jong

Acting Editor:
Marian Van Til

Assistant Editor:
Robert Vander Vennen

Editorial Assistant:
Alison de Groot

Regular Contributors:
Paul DeGroot, Stan de Jong, Anne Hutten,
Reinder J. Klein, Angela Terpstra, Nandy Heule

Accounting:
Amy Van Dokkumburg

Advertising:
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Layout & Design:
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Typesetting:
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Proofreading:
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Tel.: (416) 682-8311 or FAX: (416) 682-8313

Contemplating separation

It is my guess that the great majority of the readers of *Calvinist Contact* belong to one of the Reformed churches which have their roots in Dutch Calvinism. All of these churches subscribe to the same doctrinal standards but in the course of the last two centuries the tradition of Dutch Calvinism has been convulsed by a series of church splits, which have resulted in half a dozen different "denominations." It seems that the 20th century has produced more than its share of such divisions, and it is beginning to look as though another one may take place before this century has come to a close.

It seems as though the largest of the Dutch Calvinist churches in Canada is about to undergo another ecclesiastical sundering. The Christian Reformed Church, of which I am myself a member, is in danger of losing an entire wing of its membership in 1992. If the CRC synod of that year ratifies the decision on women in ecclesiastical office taken at the 1990 synod, it is probable that some will leave the denomination. On the other hand, if the ratification is turned down or postponed, I foresee that others will leave. In either scenario, there will probably be a lot of pain and recrimination, and this particular segment of the church universal will find it especially difficult to reflect the saving glory of its Master to the world outside.

Contentious lot

I do not have a solution to the problem of imminent separation which we seem to be facing in my church. I pray to God with all my heart that the seemingly inevitable will be averted, that he will somehow prevent the nth rending asunder of a Reformed church. But if I extrapolate present trends and attitudes, and look at the tradition of Dutch Calvinism in these matters, I am not hopeful. I am 48 years old and have already been closely associated with two church splits in the Netherlands (in 1944 and 1968). I do not relish the prospect of a third in North America.

Nevertheless, we should not despair. It is my conviction that the Reformed churches of Dutch heritage are heirs to a rich and valuable tradition, and that there is much that can be done to make that tradition fruitful for the 21st century *even if we do separate*. Let us do everything in our power to prevent such separation (especially through the power of love, prayer and personal example), but let us also look beyond separation to the possibilities of working together thereafter. I have the foolish hope that this is not impossible in God's world.

For myself, I do not intend to separate. I personally disagree with the recent synodical decision with respect to women in ecclesiastical office, and I am in profound sympathy with those who see this decision as the result of questionable hermeneutical principles. But I do not intend to break fellowship over it; instead I will do what I can to promote and consolidate what I take to be the best of the Reformed tradition within the CRC. At the same time, I will do what I can to promote active good relations with others in the Reformed family of churches, both formally and informally. And if some of my brothers and sisters, at either pole, feel in conscience bound to separate themselves, I hope to find it in my heart to respect their motives and to maintain the bond of fellowship despite ecclesiastical estrangement.

Don't 'do your own thing'

I hope too that if any leave they will not establish yet another Reformed denomination, but instead will join an existing one which on the major points in dispute has not comprised itself. The dangers of sectarianism are especially great when a small group must justify its own distinctiveness in the face of several other groups which lay claim to the same heritage.

Let me tell a personal anecdote to illustrate my feelings in this matter. I am by profession a biblical scholar, which means that I am in constant interaction with a massive tradition of biblical scholarship which denies the basic reliability and truthfulness of the Scriptures. There is probably no branch of learning today which in its dominant trends is so self-consciously secular as biblical studies. As a result, although I think it is important to stay in touch with the mainstream of my field of study, I naturally seek out like-minded believers among my professional colleagues. Last year, while attending a big international conference on Old Testament studies in Belgium, I was delighted to meet a colleague from the Netherlands who shared with me the conviction that the Bible is historically reliable. What struck me about this young scholar was that he had been raised in the tradition of the *Gereformeerde Bond* in the Netherlands, that is, the group in the mainline Dutch Reformed Church which has maintained its Reformed orthodoxy despite the liberal trends which have often characterized that denomination. As a matter of principle, this group did not separate from the *Hervormde* Church, but self-consciously chose to remain within it. My respect for that group grew as I got to know my like-minded colleague, especially when I noticed that other Reformed scholars at the conference seemed to have given up their resistance to secular biblical scholarship.

As I said to a Canadian Reformed colleague of mine not long ago: "If the Christian Reformed Church is really going to let go of its orthodox Reformed moorings, then I intend to become a *Gereformeerde Bonder* within the CRC." I need hardly add that he did not agree with me, because this view of the institutional church is our major point of difference. Nevertheless, there is much that we can do in common out of a shared allegiance to a rich Reformed tradition, both in scholarship and in other areas of life. May God grant that the threat of secession in the CRC may not make impossible the active exercise of Reformed solidarity.

Al Wolters

Al Wolters is associate professor of religion and theology and classical languages at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Letters

Like the lilies

We all have different talents

In a family with children birthday cakes must be provided when the occasion calls for it. In our family, buying a ready-made cake is considered cheating.

But I dislike baking. It's messy, time-consuming, and the better the product, the sooner you have to bake again. Fortunately, Angela, the 11-year-old in our family sees baking differently. She thrives on it. She searches cookbooks and contrives concoctions I never dream of attempting.

For a full year from the time Angela discovered her pleasure in baking, I myself didn't bake as much as a cookie. Angela took care of all the family baking needs. It was wonderful. Then at a most impertinent time, two days before her sister Alison's 9th birthday party, Angela broke her ankle.

I had to admit it would be almost cruel to expect her to gather and measure ingredients while hopping about on crutches with a swollen, splinted, throbbing ankle.

I was back in the kitchen, measuring cup in hand. I cheated somewhat: I bought a mix, and ready-made icing on sale for $1.49.

I prepared the mix without mishap, some minutes after the cake was done I flipped the pans over onto two plates. Half of each cake layer flopped down onto its place. The other half stuck to the bottom of the tin. Expecting some such crisis, I calmly found a spatula to gently pry out the rest of the cake and let each piece drop carefully onto its other part.

The icing was rather stiff in its canister so I diluted it with a few splats of milk. When I had the desired consistency, as the recipes say, I spread this on to one overturned cake layer. It took great skill and lightness of touch.

Very deftly I flipped the second layer over the first, by halves, of course, as one half stuck onto the plate.

Creativity covers errors

I generously iced all around the double layers in a swirling crumb-filled pattern. This done there was no icing left to cover the top of the cake. Would five nine-year-olds notice? Of course they would: nine-year-olds can be very critical.. I carefully robbed the swirls on the sides of the cake, only gouging into the actual cake once. I would have to remember to turn that side away from Alison and her guests.

Finally after what seemed an eternity, the whole cake was covered.

For the finishing touches, I whipped up some decorator icing with confectionery sugar and water. What I took for the correct consistency was a little runny; but I didn't figure that out until it was on the cake.

In a generous mood, I scrawled **Happy** across the cake. Very nice, correct spelling, but no room left for **Birthday**. Oh well, I could tuck **Day** down at the bottom. Then I made nine little blobs which were supposed to look like flowers; but they came out blobs in a random pattern.

A mother's love

As an afterthought, I planted nice raspberry candies on the blobs. Quickly, before any more afterthoughts might occur, I hid the whole thing under a cake cover.

When my best friend walked in several minutes later, I pulled up the cover, mumbling, "It's a bit of a disaster. I hope Alison's friends aren't too critical."

"It looks like a mother's love," she comforted. This is why she is my best friend.

She was right. Nobody said anything about the cake: they were wondering why the pizza was burnt. Alison kindly explained it to them, "My mom is getting to be a worse and worse cook."

Marian den Boer is a free-lance writer who lives in Hamilton, Ont.

Canadians 'fools' for making, admiring Bethune film

I am sending you a copy of a *Financial Post* article about the Bethune film.

I read Marian Van Til's review, and I quite strongly disagree with your concluding paragraph. Well, your "for better or for worse" leaves it up in the air, something that I think should not be done. In my view Bethune was a totally misguided (a very mild term) man who rejected the Christian faith and used his influence to serve as an apologist for a most despicable and anti-human ideology. I think Canadians are fools to make and admire this film. But this and so many other current episodes are just signs of the utter confusion and ignorance that now seems to reign supreme in this country. It's too bad.

Harry Antonides
Willowdale, Ont.

Need respect for our forebears

I have to agree with Edo and Margaret Knibbe ("Letters," C.C., November 9) regarding Adrian Peetoom's editorial [about his family]. The way he writes about his parents and family shocked me. Our fathers and mothers began teaching us about the Lord almost as soon as we were born.

In later years we could also see their faults — they were sinners just like we are. But they were redeemed by Jesus Christ our Saviour. They did have their struggles, but they served our Saviour. We have to respect our parents and not look at their faults. And also, he writes about [his] church, the Christian Reformed Church. It is plain that he feels himself above everybody if he believes he will straighten out a "lot of things." I believe he will break down more of the unity instead of building up the church.

He also writes about the Second World War. There were thousands upon thousands of people who resisted the oppressor, and I know many have laid their lives on the line and they did not worry about their jobs, etc.

I hope that such writing will not appear in *Calvinist Contact*. We believe in building up our readers in service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fred Smids
Chatham, Ont.

Didn't mean to dismiss Calvin

Re: my letter "Calvin's been on his pedestal long enough" (C.C. October 19). It seems that for some people the message that came through was that I have no respect for Calvin. I did not mean to say that, because Calvin, in his time, was used greatly by God, and who am I not to honour such people? If I offended anyone, I apologize.

My main point was: do we go to or seek advice for problems from human beings, or are we listening to what the Holy Spirit has to say to the churches? (See Rev. 2-3). The Holy Spirit is always more "up to date" than people who lived 400 years ago.

... "Let no one glory in men," says I Cor. 2:21, "for all things are yours whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come." All are ours because we are in Christ (if we have died with him), and Christ is God's. That's the bottom line.

Sid Denekamp
Burlington, Ont.

Hesitation overcome

We have been hesitating about renewing our subscription because we don't always read it because of a lack of time. If it were smaller, didn't come so often and was cheaper we would not hesitate.

We hate to do completely without, but that seems to be the only other choice. We do feel that it is a very good newspaper, one that we can trust, so we will subscribe for another year.

Annette Vander Klippe
Calgary, Alta.

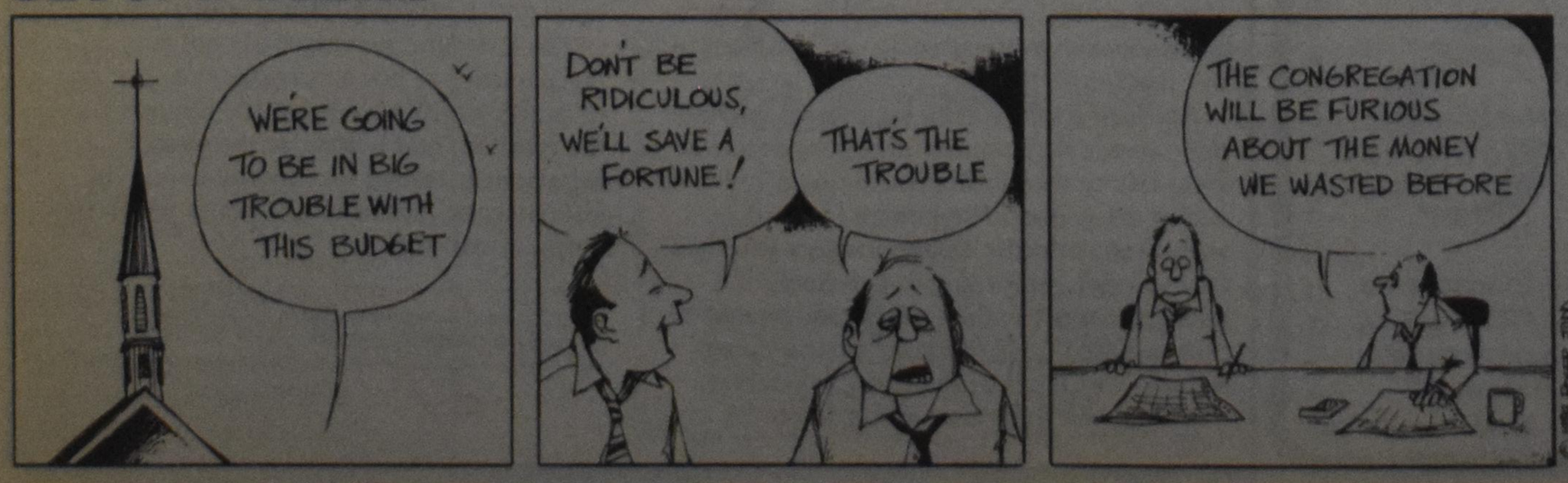
Enjoys wide scope of news

Enclosed is [my payment] to extend my "GST free" subscription for two more years.

Keep up the good work, I'm really enjoying all the international news.

Gwendolyn Dekker
Port Williams, N.S.

BEYOND BELIEF


WE'RE GOING TO BE IN BIG TROUBLE WITH THIS BUDGET
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, WE'LL SAVE A FORTUNE!
THAT'S THE TROUBLE
THE CONGREGATION WILL BE FURIOUS ABOUT THE MONEY WE WASTED BEFORE

No sex 'in the open,' please

I still look forward every time to seeing C.C. coming. I don't know if I'm getting too old or if things have to change so much — but I don't like that word *sex* in there! The more that gets in the open, the worse it gets! That should be taught in private.

M.H.
Kentwood, Mich.

News

Empty refugee camp sign of good job by relief organization

AMMAN, Jordan (EP) — "There's no happier sight than an empty refugee camp," said the Rev. Clifford M. Westergren with a smile, surveying row after row of tents standing empty on the barren terrain of Jordan's border with Kuwait.

Westergren, director of "CAMA Services," the relief agency of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), said that the organization participated in one of the largest and fastest resolutions of a mass refugee problem in recent times. By the end of October, tens of thousands of refugees from Kuwait and Iraq who had fled to Jordan, had been cared for and sent on to their home countries from around the world.

"Jordanian government officials deserve an accolade for the way they handled the massive influx of refugees," Westergren said. "They allocated space for the camps, sliced through red tape so the refugees could move on as fast as possible, and gave relief agencies the freedom they needed to do their job."

Westergren explained that the measure in which Christians responded to the crisis will have long-term benefits. "The refugees were touched by compassion at a crucial moment in their lives, and they will not forget," he said. "The churches of Jordan have heightened stature before the government because of the marvelous way they responded."

'Christian' group sends racist mailings to U.S. soldiers in Operation Desert Shield

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — A mailing of racist and anti-Semitic materials sent to U.S. Army personnel now serving in Saudi Arabia has been linked to an extremist group by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a Jewish organization.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL, said that information has been provided to the Secretary of Defense and to domestic law enforcement agencies, including the FBI. Foxman said that Defense Department officials have warned field commanders in Operation Desert Shield about the mailing.

The letters allege "Jewish control of America" and warn that if white "Aryan" soldiers die "fighting the war for the Jews in Israel," then "white women in the U.S. will marry non-whites." The letters insist, "We do respect the other races and their cultures, with exception of the Jewish people. We hate their anti-Christ beliefs, and their Talmud, which advocates hating Christians."

Foxman said, "This is a brazen attempt to dishearten and create disunity among American troops."

He added, "We recognize everyone's right to use the mails for purposes of free speech expression, short of obscenity or threatening messages. The mail serves an especially purposeful function in keeping America's soldiers in touch with family and friends at home. Those truly concerned with the safety and well-being of our armed services personnel appreciate the importance of maintaining this contact and its relation to morale. However, the [racist] mailing serves none of these purposes."

Thousands of Canadians are waiting for the gift of a life-saving transplant. The Kidney Foundation of Canada urges you to sign an organ donor card.

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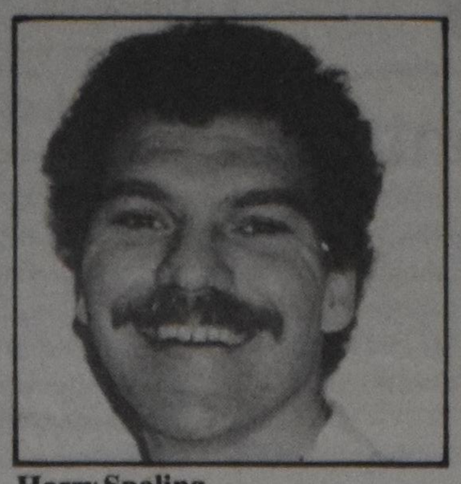


Harry Spaling

Earthtenders

Our place and task in the environment

The Gaia hypothesis

Science has traditionally viewed the earth as a mechanical system of many physical parts all held together by forces which could be understood by the explanatory laws of physics, such as the theory of gravity and the laws of thermodynamics. Physics was seen as the queen of the sciences because of convincing explanations applicable to a gigantic universe and invisible molecules.

After several hundred years of looking at the earth from a mechanical or Newtonian perspective, the scientific world was shaken in 1979 by a new view of the earth. James Lovelock, a British scientist, proposed the "Gaia hypothesis." Named after the Greek goddess of life, this hypothesis states that the earth is a living planet which regulates its own environment.

In contrast to the Newtonian view which reduces all explanations to physical laws (implying that life is at the mercy of these laws) the Gaia hypothesis bases explanations on evolutionary biology, suggesting that the earth, as a giant living organism, intentionally and purposefully changes its environment to suit life.

Delicate balance

Based on his work as an atmospheric scientist, Lovelock concluded that the delicate balance of life-sustaining gases in the air can only be maintained by living organisms which constantly recycle these gases. He points to the estimated 25 per cent increase in the temperature of the sun over millions of years but the constant temperature on the earth as evidence of the planet's ability to maintain conditions suitable for life.

Most recently, Lovelock discovered that sunlight stimulates the release of gases from surface algae in the oceans. These gases influence cloud formation resulting in cooler temperatures, winds and storms which, in turn, cause the mixing of ocean layers, bringing up needed nutrients to the surface algae. Lovelock uses this sequence of events as evidence that life alters its environment to suit itself.

According to the Gaia hypothesis, human interference with natural processes occurs at great risk to the globe's finely-tuned ecological system. The human-induced greenhouse effect is an abnormality for Gaia. One solution, according to Lovelock, is nuclear energy because it does not depend on carbon-based fuels. Another solution is to reforest vast areas of the earth's surface so that Gaia can have more living resources to recycle carbon dioxide and keep the planet from warming up.

Newton's view wasn't the answer

Initially, scientists viewed the Gaia hypothesis with much skepticism. But this is slowly changing. The environmental movement in particular has latched onto the Gaia hypothesis. It promotes the Gaia perspective as a much-needed solution to ecological problems facing the globe, although the nuclear energy option advocated by Lovelock is difficult for environmentalists to swallow.

The merging of science and religion is blatantly evident in the Gaia hypothesis. An ancient mythical goddess, the image of a nurturing mother and provider of life, is mixed with scientific theory and postulated as a radically new perspective which should govern not only scientific inquiry but also human actions and behaviour. If scientific understanding and human activities are not directed to serve Gaia, her dark side will become evident and she will become ruthless in her own survival. Humans have a choice to follow Gaia or risk the peril of her wrath in ecological disaster.

The third way

The Newtonian view of the earth as a mechanical system is being challenged by the Gaia hypothesis. While scientists debate these views, the scriptures offer another view. In this view, the focus is not on an inert mechanical system nor on a survival-oriented organism, rather the focus is outside of itself and directed toward praising its Creator.

Scripture has long recognized that the physical elements of creation are not just inert objects but give praise to the Creator. The stars, mountains, streams and rocks all reveal the Creator's handiwork. Likewise, living organisms also glorify and praise their Creator. Fruit trees, cedars, birds, fishes and beasts of the fields all bring praise.

The scriptural perspective is not a mechanical one nor an organic one, but one of praise-worthiness. Scientific inquiry into the creation, and human actions and behaviour affecting the environment, will ultimately be judged by the praise which they reveal or conceal.

Harry Spaling is a doctoral student in geography at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ont.

British Christian satirist commemorated:

Malcolm Muggeridge 1903-1990

Ed Vanderkloet

On Nov. 14 the media reported that Malcolm Muggeridge had died at the age of 87.

Muggeridge (affectionately known as "St. Mugg") was one of the most colourful and remarkable figures of 20th century Britain. Born in London, he grew up in an ardently socialist family. His father, a low-ranking civil servant, spent almost all of his free time propagating the cause of socialism in Britain, and the familyroom was the frequent scene of hot debates on how the country, nay, the world, should be run on the solid foundation of workers' solidarity.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb, prominent Fabian socialists during the early part of this century, were Muggeridge's uncle and aunt, by marriage, and regular visitors to the Muggeridge household. After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Soviet Union became their land of hope and glory.

Predictably, Muggeridge was thrilled to be assigned to the post of Moscow correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* in 1932. He was eager to enlighten his fellow Britons back home about the glories of the new Marxist paradise in the making and its demi-god, Josef Stalin.

But unlike many of his fellow journalists, Muggeridge discovered within months the ugly face of Soviet communism. His denunciations of the regime (with millions of Ukrainians dying in a state-planned famine) won him the hatred of Stalin and his henchmen as well as the bitter enmity of countless Westerners who crowed with delight about the marvellous achievements of the new workers' utopia. It also earned him the severe disapproval of his superiors in England. Badmouthing communism wasn't the in-thing to do.

Muggeridge became one of Britain's most famous satirists. His sense of humour knew no bounds and he directed his parodies against the British Raj, the Establishment, the communists, the Nazis, and the Church. During World War II he served for a while in the British Intelligence Service but he considered his enlistment a ghastly mistake. Nobody was surprised when he received an appointment as editor of *Punch*, Britain's acclaimed humour magazine, in 1953, a position he held until 1957.

(He said, "Life holds no more wretched occupation than trying to make the English laugh.")

Late in life Muggeridge, the agnostic, became a Christian. But this did not dull his razor-sharp, typically English wit. His conversion to the Roman Catholic Church some 10 years ago was no doubt influenced by his great admiration for Mother Theresa, about whose work in the slums of Calcutta he wrote a moving book.

Muggeridge authored several books. They include *Chronicles of Wasted Time, Something Beautiful for God* and *Jesus Rediscovered.*

The scope of this article does not allow for lengthy quotes. Here are just a few samples:

American politicians are said to be corrupt, and English politicians honest. This is true. I like Stephen Leacock's comment, 'American politicians will do anything for money, English politicians take the money and won't do anything.'

People used to say that the sun never sets on the British Empire. But on the British Commonwealth it never rises.

It has been said that when human beings stop believing in God they believe in nothing. The truth is much worse; they believe in anything.

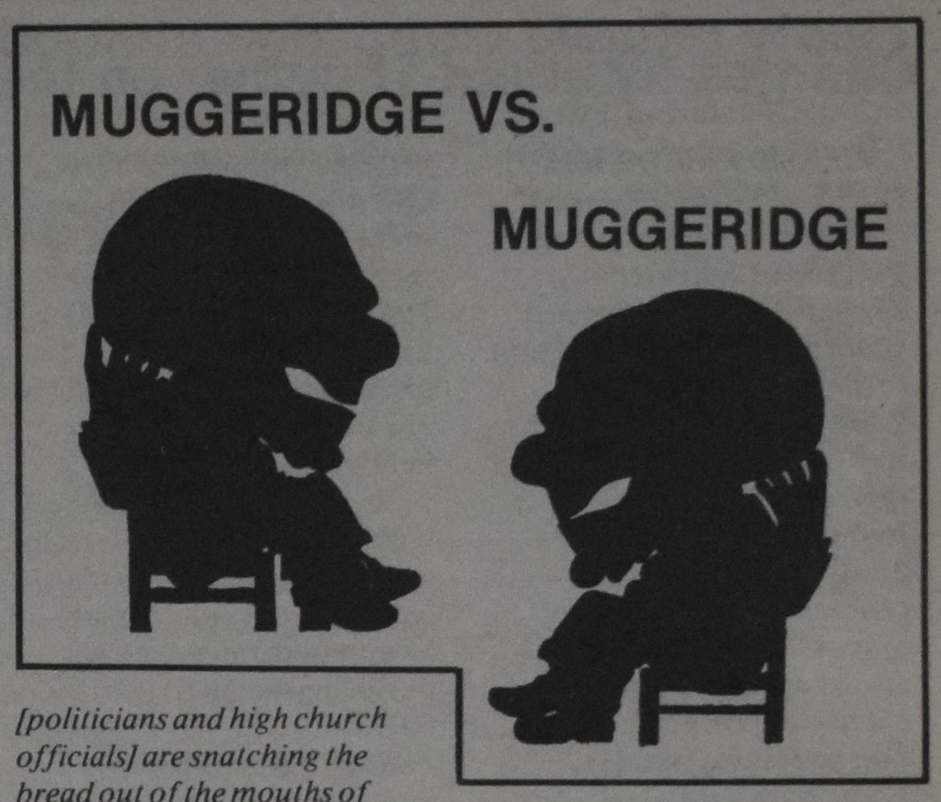
Hewlett Johnson, the "Red Dean of Canterbury" who received the Stalin Peace Prize, Muggeridge called the man "who preaches Stalin and him sanctified."

When his friend George Orwell showed him the manuscript of *Animal Farm,* Muggeridge suggested that when the pigs begin to walk on two legs Orwell should introduce Hewlett Johnson crawling on all fours. But Orwell rejected the idea saying it was a trifle too ribald.

The identification of a church and a state is about as farcical as a vegetarian joining the Butchers' Union.

These public figures [politicians and high church officials] are snatching the bread out of the mouths of professional entertainers just by being themselves.

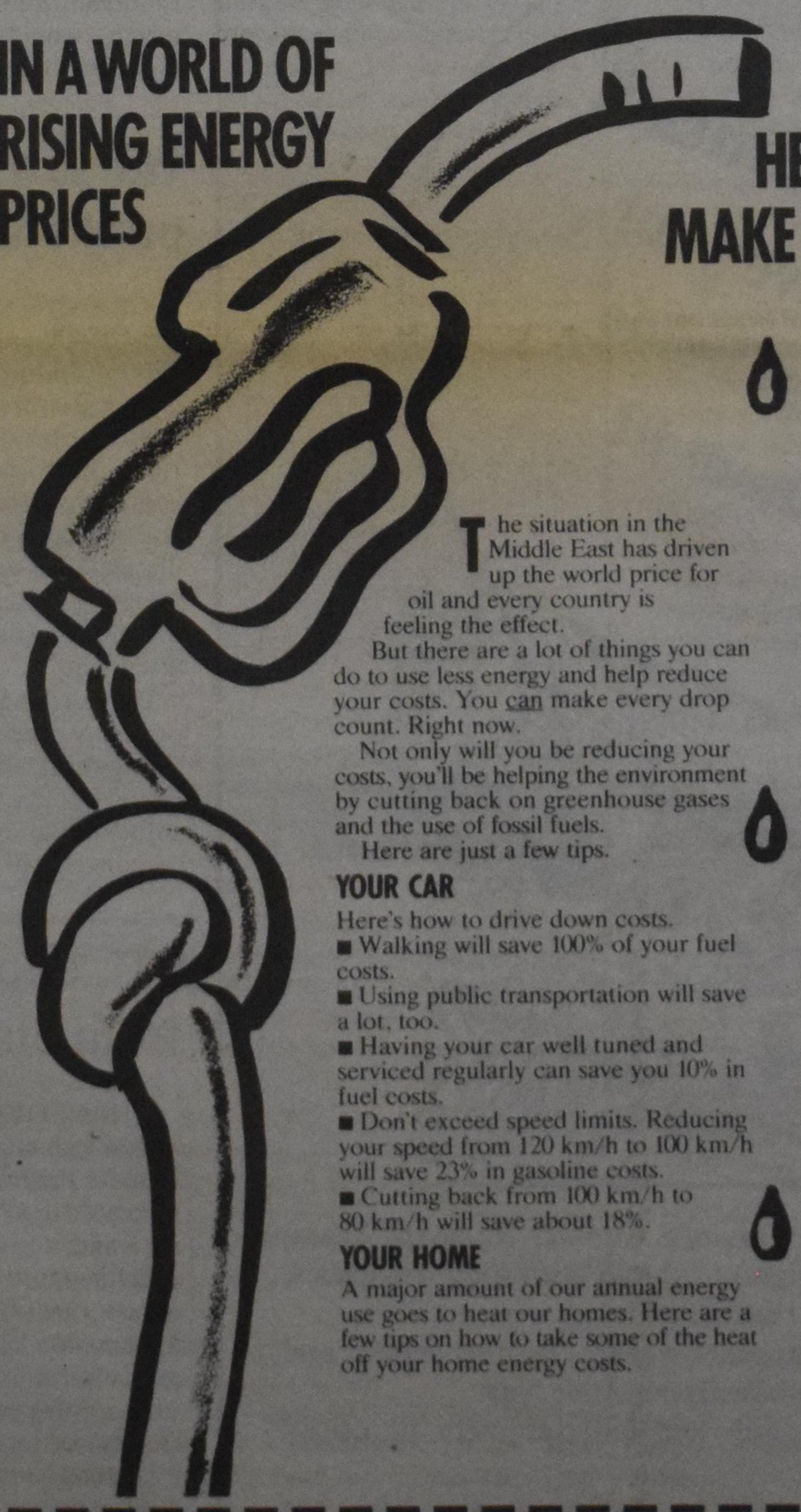
On television I feel like a man playing a piano in a brothel; every now and again he solaces himself by playing 'Abide with Me' in the hope of edifying both the clients and the inmates.



Malcolm Muggeridge has now joined the multitude of saints who from their labours rest, assuming they do rest. If there is humour in heaven (as I suspect there is) he will no doubt liven up the celestial throng with his matchless wit.

Ed Vanderkloet does research for the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

IN A WORLD OF RISING ENERGY PRICES



HERE'S HOW YOU CAN MAKE EVERY DROP COUNT.

The situation in the Middle East has driven up the world price for oil and every country is feeling the effect.

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Here are just a few tips.

YOUR CAR

Here's how to drive down costs.
- Walking will save 100% of your fuel costs.
- Using public transportation will save a lot, too.
- Having your car well tuned and serviced regularly can save you 10% in fuel costs.
- Don't exceed speed limits. Reducing your speed from 120 km/h to 100 km/h will save 23% in gasoline costs.
- Cutting back from 100 km/h to 80 km/h will save about 18%.

YOUR HOME

A major amount of our annual energy use goes to heat our homes. Here are a few tips on how to take some of the heat off your home energy costs.

HEATING
- If you lower your thermostat from 22°C to 20°C during the day and to 17°C at night you could save up to 15% on your heating bills.
- Oil furnaces should be tuned up once a year.
- Clean or replace furnace filters regularly.
- Seal your furnace ductwork with duct tape and insulate hot air ducts passing through unheated spaces.

WEATHERPROOFING
- Weatherstrip windows and doors.
- Caulk windows and door frames.
- Insulate attic, walls and basement to recommended levels. Install a vapour barrier where necessary.

YOUR WORLD

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Canada

Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Charges fly about Together on the Way

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — When the General Secretary of the Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK) suggested that the Reformed Churches (GKN) should return to the 'church of the fatherland' (that is, the NHK), the GKN moderator responded that such a suggestion went 'right down the wrong throat.'' The GKN moderator E. Overeem said the process of union of the two churches always presumed that a new church would form in place of the two or three partners.

The NHK general secretary, Rev. J. Haeck, earlier this year spoke at a regional synod about the union process, called ''Together on the Way (TOW).'' He said that TOW meant at bottom the surrender of the identity of the NHK as the church of the fatherland. He said the NHK was planted by God in this land. Its historical identity should not be disturbed by human intervention.

So, Haeck concluded, since both sides declare there is really no issue over which they must separate today, why not just have the separated churches (including the GKN) join the NHK?

When this speech was printed in September, Overeem reacted angrily. ''This suggestion was never in the TOW process,'' he said. Overeem said he was sure there were people in the NHK who felt as Haeck does, but it was certainly unacceptable to the GKN.

Then J. van der Graaf, the secretary of the Reformed Alliance within the NHK, supported Haeck's views, suggesting that Overeem had lost all of his insight into Groen (19th century Dutch theologian and politician).

Historical or normative?

Klaas Runia, the editor of *Centraal Weekblad*, commented that van der Graaf was right that Groen had supported the notion of a ''fatherland church.'' In this case, Runia said, Groen let something historical — the formation of the NHK at the time of national independence — become something normative.

Runia said he would grant that the founding of the NHK at that crucial time in Netherlands history was in fact a work of God, but 400 years ago. The churches that separated in the 19th century also experienced their actions as a work of God. Runia reminded his readers there were Christians and a church in the Netherlands before either of these churches.

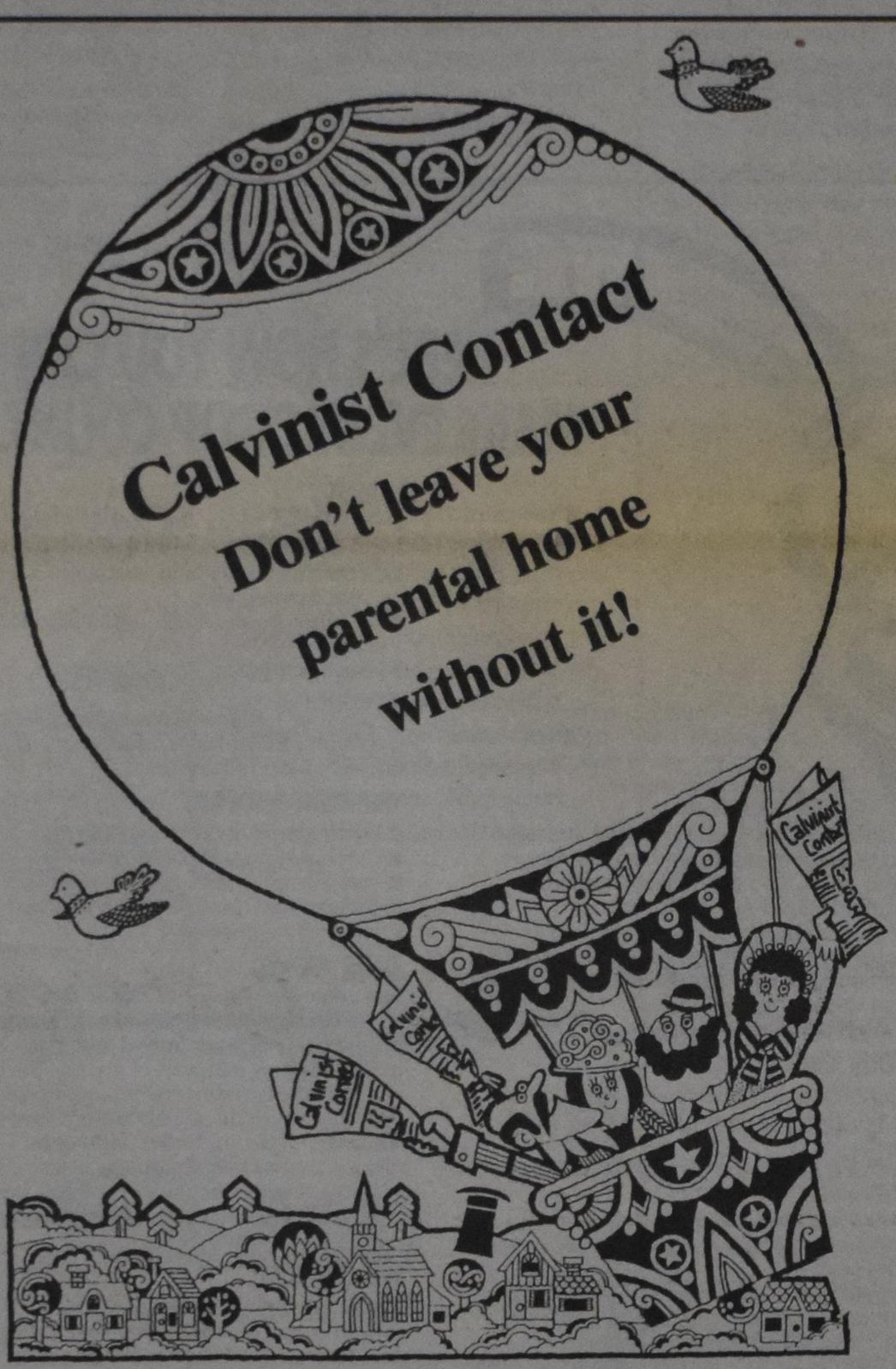
Runia concluded that the remarks of Haeck and van der Graaf made no contribution whatever to the union process. If the process is restored, it will have to be ''on the way'' to a new and renewed church.

Bible translators will co-operate

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Twelve Bible translation and distribution organizations have made an historic agreement to co-operate. Meeting in England, the 12 issued separate statements on distribution and translation.

At Lausanne II in Manila in July 1989, representatives of the organizations agreed that a meeting would be helpful. The organizations often found themselves duplicating efforts in translations and sometimes competing in distribution networks.

Missions should take the role of the Bible more seriously, the 12 said in their statements. They noted the ''increased reliance upon the sharing of experience rather than the Scriptures.'' They urged mission societies to make Scripture distribution an integral part of outreach.



Yes, your parents have subscribed to *Calvinist Contact* for many years. But if you still think of C.C. as an immigrant tabloid with long obituaries, you have missed out on a lot of exciting reading of late.

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Human rights study guide published

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — *Human Rights: a Biblical Study* is a guide for church groups to look at contemporary issues in human rights. Each of the six lessons contains concrete, contemporary examples, a discussion of some relevant Scripture passages and a set of questions to stimulate group discussion.

Dr. Gordon Spykman, professor of religion and theology at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., is the author of the book. He was also the convener of the REC study committee on human rights in the early 1980s. This study guide was stimulated by the REC report. The REC at Chicago 1984 requested a study guide for the report. Eventually, production was taken over by the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The new book, however, stands entirely on is own merit and does not require the REC report in order to be used and appreciated. It is available from CRC Publications for U.S. $5.50 (2850 Kalamazoo SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507).

PTL supporters seek $757 million from Jim Bakker in civil trial

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (EP) — One year after PTL Ministry founder Jim Bakker was sentenced to 45 years in prison for fraud, a civil trial opened in which supporters of the ministry are seeking more than $757 million from the fallen televangelist.

In opening arguments October 24, an attorney for PTL donors told the jury that Bakker committed ''management fraud'' in asking his followers to send money.

''We represent some 145,000 investors who were told that for $1,000 investment they would receive the right to stay for four days and three nights in ... [PTL hotels],'' said attorney Tom Anderson.

Jim Toms, representing Bakker, told the jury that the people suing Bakker had gladly contributed their money years ago. ''The constituency of PTL, including the lifetime partners, wanted Jim and Tammy Bakker to prosper. And [the Bakkers] didn't hide their lifestyle,'' Toms said.

In the suit, thousands of former ministry ''partners'' are accusing Bakker of conspiring with others to misuse ministry funds. The suit also charges that Bakker and top aides ''laundered'' money before spending it on themselves.

No Cinema Summaries this week.

A Presbyterian Comments

Non-member members

Robert J. Bernhardt

In the Presbyterian Church in Canada it has been recognized in recent years that there are an increasing number of people who associate with local congregations without formally joining. In 1989 congregations across the country reported a total of 62,134 people under their pastoral care who were not actually members. Interestingly, this was an increase of 5,213 over the previous year. In Presbyterian terminology these individuals are called "adherents."

The thing that has really captured attention is the fact that the number of adherents is growing so significantly during a time when formal church membership is actually in decline. This invited study and an effort to do a survey amongst adherents within the Presbyterian Church produced some very interesting findings. A report on this study is entitled "The Non-Member Member."

Although they attended worship somewhat less frequently, the profile of the typical "adherent" was in many ways similar to the personal profile of the typical "member." As a matter of fact, the majority of them had been baptized and 87 per cent of them acknowledged having made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Curiously, 42 per cent of them consider themselves to be members of some other church in addition to the Presbyterian congregation in which they participate and are counted as an adherent.

'Not important'

While 53 per cent of the adherents surveyed had no Presbyterian roots within two generations, 28 per cent acknowledged that they were from a family in which both parents were Presbyterians. The reasons given for preferring affiliation without formal membership were varied. Some did not join because of the feelings of a spouse. Others saw joining to be a denial of their traditional denominational roots. It was their way of embracing two traditions while denying neither.

For many of them formal membership was seen to be of little importance. They would prefer to be known simply as "Christian" or "Protestant." A large number of the adherents chose not to join the church because they are unaware of or sometimes uncomfortable with what the Presbyterian Church believes. They are able to benefit from the church's ministry and participate in its fellowship without being obliged to concur in its teaching or practice. (It is to be noted that current Presbyterian practice in Canada would not deny these individuals the right to participate at the Lord's Table.)

The survey also determined that the situation with respect to adherents is not likely to change. Only 12 per cent of the adherents surveyed were presently considering joining the church. Indeed, 58 per cent of them stated that "they are not and would not consider being formal members of the church."

A report to the 1990 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada made the church aware of these findings and urged congregations to respond to the presence of adherents in their midst in a variety of positive and supportive ways. Congregations were also urged to listen and learn from their adherents as they may "provide valuable clues to the meaning of effective ministry."

Surely, there is also in this some further indication of the weakening of denominational ties and loyalties in the Christian community. We may do well to ponder carefully all the clues that such surveys provide. They may offer some crucial glimpses of the future face of the Christian community in Canada.

Robert Bernhardt is pastor of Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont.

Lutheran church adopts expectations for ordained ministers

CHICAGO, Ill. (EP) — A document calling for homosexual ministers to remain celibate was approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Church in America (ELCA) during its October 19-22 meeting.

"This document should not be understood as a juridical standard," the text declares. "It is offered for those who are already on the roster of ordained ministers of this church as a statement of expectations and hopes for the shape of ordained ministry, as well as an invitation for reflection and consideration to those who seek to serve in the ordained ministry."

The document says ordained ministers should uphold the doctrinal traditions of the church, witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and lead an exemplary life.

"The ordained minister as person and example" leads "a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ," the statement says. "Ordained ministers fulfil the calling of the pastoral office not only by what they do in carrying out certain tasks, but also in who they are."

A section on sexual conduct says, "Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual relationships." It also asserts that single ordained ministers are expected to be chaste and married clergy faithful to their spouses. Another section provides guidance for dealing with separation, divorce and remarriage of the ordained.

Standards for living in community

ELCA Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom said, "Whenever we bring ourselves into community, it is necessary to agree on how we shall live within the community, and to set out what we expect of one another. Standards and expectations for pastors and lay workers in the Lutheran church have always existed. At times, they have been largely unwritten. These assumptions may no longer be taken for granted."

A leader in the more conservative American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC) said the document's failure to condemn homosexuality as sin could signal some church members that the ELCA is drifting morally. "The ELCA is taking a morally inconsistent position," said Dr. Christopher Barnekov, editor of *Evangel,* an AALC publication. "On the one hand, their bishops absolutely refuse to say that there is anything inherently sinful with homosexual behaviour itself, or that homosexuals need to repent, like other sinners. On the other hand, they know their people will not tolerate open acceptance of homosexual pastors, at least this year. So their position is 'It's okay to be gay, but you can't be a pastor.' This is self-contradictory."

He added, "Many lay people and clergy in the ELCA have been watching these developments very carefully with a great deal of concern. Many of them are in contact with us, but they're waiting to see which way the ELCA goes."

Send your questions to Peter and Marja c/o Calvinist Contact. Confidentiality is assured.

FROM COAST TO COAST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Abbotsford-CFVR	7:30 am	850
Burns Lake-CFLD	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK	8:30 am	1230
Osoyoos-CKOO	8:30am	1490
Penticton-CKOK	8:30am	800
Port Alberni-CJAV	10:30 am	1240
Prince George-CIBC	8:30am	94.3
Princeton-CKRP	8:30am	1460
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CKSP	8:30am	1450
Vancouver-CJVB	9:00am	1470
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940

ALBERTA

Brooks-CKBR	8:00 am	1340
Edmonton-CHQT	7:30am	880
Edson-CJYR	10:00am	970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230
St. Albert-CHMG	7:00 am	12.00
Taber-CKTA	8:00am	1570

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810

NEW BRUNSWICK

Fredericton-CFNB	6:30am	550
Newcastle-CFAN	9:00am	790
Saint John-CHSJ	9:00am	700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am	630

QUEBEC

Montreal-CFQR(fm)	7:30am	92.5

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450

ONTARIO

Ajax-CHOO	9:30am	1390
Atikokan-CFAK	10:30am	1240
Burlington-CING(fm)	7:30pm	107.9
Chatham-CFCO	9:30pm	630
Guelph-CJOY	9:00pm	1460
Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing-CKAP	9:00am	580
Kingston-CFMK	10:00am	96.3
Newmarket-CKAN	8:00am	1480
Oshawa-CKAR	8:00 am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHRO (Sat.)	6:30pm	1350
Pembroke-CHRO	10:00am	1350
Slt. Ste. Marie-CFYN	10:00am	1050
St. Catharines-CKTB	10:00 pm	610
Sarnia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
Windsor-CKLW	9:00am	800
Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK(fm)	8:00am	102.3

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FEATURE

Managing our anger

Randall Johnson

"Nothing in us so defiles and destroys the beauty and the glory of living as do emotions; nothing so elevates, purifies, enriches and strengthens life, as do emotions. Through our emotions we can have the worst, or the best; we can descend to the lowest depths, or we can rise to the highest heights."

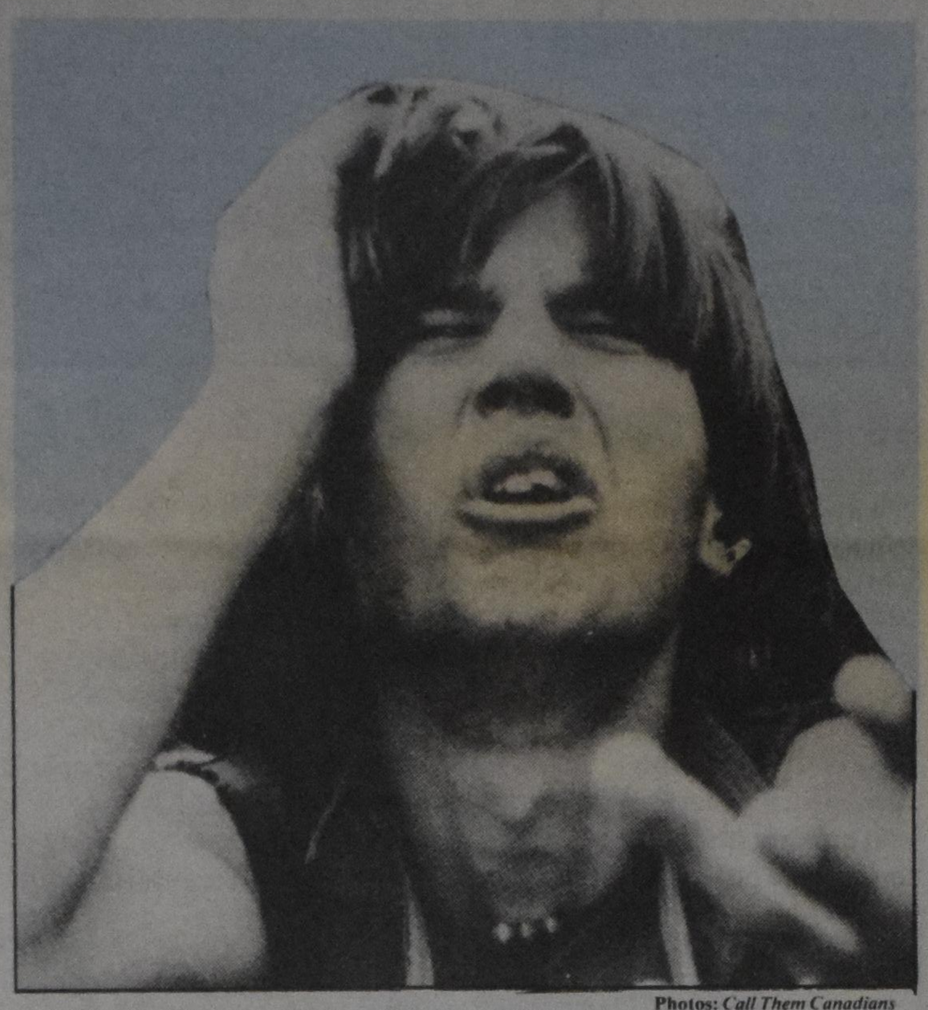
So states Norman Wright on the complexity of our emotions. Whether we like it or not, we are emotional creatures. God has made us that way. He, himself, has feelings and moods. Scripture is full of references to God's emotional reactions.

Never lukewarm

We use this energy to create change in our own personal lives as well as in the world around us. As Dr. J.H. Jowett said, "The Holy Spirit makes us capable of healthy heat, and it inspires the fire within us. The Holy Spirit never creates a character that is lukewarm, neutral or indifferent." Therefore, be angry, Christians, for it is needed to fight injustice and sin.

We can also use anger negatively and destructively. Rather than focusing on injustice, negative anger is directed at people. It motivates us to hate, despise, scorn, ridicule, tease, humiliate, criticize, scold, irritate and offend. People use anger negatively when they attack other people verbally or physically with the energy of these intense feelings.

Far too many Christians are incapable of managing their anger successfully. The people in their lives — their spouses, their children, their friends — are wounded by their destructive, and unhealthy behaviour. Healthy people, spiritual people do not try to blunt or deaden their emotional



Photos: *Call Them Canadians*

"The loss created by deprivation becomes a spawning bed for these negative emotions."

Positive emotional memories of fun, of pleasure, of love bring a richness and a vitality to our life. They give our life depth and meaning. However, negative emotional memories spawned by moments of pain, of rejection, of loss distract us from the joy of life and burden our lives and our souls to sometimes an overwhelming degree. This article is about one of those negative emotions: the emotion of anger.

Anger in and of itself is not negative. Actually anger is an important and significant emotion, especially for Christians. By definition, anger is an emotion of intense displeasure, frustration, a reflexive result of being troubled, hurt, or pained. Anger is energy — an energy to resist and fight against these feelings of displeasure and unhappiness. Therefore, anger has a positive use in that it fights injustice and we can use it as an energy for our own survival when feeling threatened or attacked.

Denying anger's existence

Probably the number one reason people do not manage their negative emotions successfully is that they deny the very existence of the emotions. No one likes to admit they are angry. Quite often they deny being angry, but they might admit to feeling frustrated, griped, fed-up, sore, troubled, exasperated, hurt, or annoyed. But they are not angry.

How wrong they are. These are labels for anger. We need to accept and acknowledge them. We will be unsuccessful in expressing these feelings in a healthy way if we continue to deny them.

Often it helps to acknowledge the sources of these negative emotions and to understand what truly creates the feeling of anger and displeasure in our lives. Deprivation may be the number one source of negative emotions. When we feel deprived, when we can't get what we want, when we can't be what we want, when we can't do what we want, we become angry. The loss created by deprivation becomes a spawning bed for these negative emotions.

Secondly, physical and emotional pain creates feelings of anger. What are you like when you're feeling sick and you have a headache or your back is acting up again? Aren't you a bit irritable, touchy, or cross? If the significant relationships of your life are not fruitful and nurturing, doesn't it frustrate you and cause you to be provoked and angry? The people who come to my office and share their life stories with me tell me these things are true.

Fear begets anger

Fear also makes us angry. Fear and anxiety have a paralyzing effect on us. We are frozen and afraid to move. Because of the uncomfortableness of this experience, we often transform our fear into anger. Because anger is an energy, we are then able to free ourselves from our dilemma. One example might be if a woman fears her husband is cheating on her, but does nothing. Not until she becomes angry does she confront him and possibly bring a resolution to her pain. But people misread our behaviour and do not realize that we are more afraid than angry.

Children are marvelous at this transformation. Far too often parents try to control the child's angry behaviour without realizing how scared the child may be about what is happening in his or her life. For example, a child whose parents are divorcing may act very aggressively and angrily, but in reality is more scared than mad.

Finally, stress causes anger. Stress — that relentless sense of pressure and expectation that is fostered in our lives and won't go away. It continues to build. Day by day, feelings of hostility and anger grow as we fight this never-ending demand to meet the expectations of others and ourselves.

"Probably the number one reason people do not manager their negative emotions successfully is that they deny the very existence of the emotions."

Keeping the lid on

Take a moment for yourself and acknowledge that you, too, might be angry. Look at your life and sort out the sources of anger that may exist for you. You will not be alone. All of us must deal with this ever-present emotion.

There are four ways people manage their negative emotions. Although we all use these methods to some degree or another, the extent to which we isolate ourselves to one method of anger expression is the degree to which we have the capability of being unhealthy or to create unhealthy relationships.

One common way we manage our negative emotions is through **suppression.** We suppress our anger by keeping the lid on it and by keeping our mouth shut. We know we are angry, but we are not going to let the anger out. There are certainly moments in life when

"The first danger is that people who suppress their emotions have a tendency to pick on secondary targets."

suppression is crucial and needed. Far too often people who have not been able to suppress their anger at important moments produce destructive results. Teens are often guilty of this. They impulsively mouth-off to their coaches, teachers, or parents and create greater trouble for themselves. Instead, they should linger with their hurt and anger, sort it out, and talk about it later.

However, there is also danger in resorting to suppression as your only way to manage negative emotions. The first danger is that people who suppress their emotions have a tendency to pick on secondary targets. It is the proverbial "I couldn't yell at my boss, so I came home and kicked the dog." How many of our families are reaping the negative harvest of misdirected and misplaced anger — anger that was stuffed and swallowed and later released on spouses, children and friends. Too many people are victims of misdirected and misplaced anger.

The second result of an overuse of suppression is guilt. Because we know we're angry but are afraid or realize there are restructions about feeling angry at parents, at God, or at the church, we swallow our negative feelings. Yet we feel guilty with their existence. Many people suffer depression as the result of frozen feelings of guilt over swallowed anger. Suppression is OK, but only in limited amounts.

Venting

A second form of managing our negative emotions is through **expression** — that burst of feeling and action that comes with tempers and explosions. We express our negative emotions by venting them verbally and acting them out physically. We slam doors, throw tools, and scream at children, all the while saying "we feel better" when we've released our anger. It may be true that venting creates a relief, but not for the victim. The victim is left with hurt feelings, destroyed confidence, and fearful expectations of the next blowup. Impulsive outbursts of negative emotions are destructive and dangerous.

Bury and forget

The third style of managing negative emotions is **repression.** Repression is denying anger. It is burying the anger so deep that we, ourselves, forget about its existence. When we do this, anger becomes an unconscious force in our life. It begins to work on us from the inside, often without our awareness. I would suggest two pictures for remembering the effects of repressing negative emotions.

One is the Beach Ball Syndrome. Picture yourself at the lake with one of those large, plastic, multicoloured beach balls. The beach ball represents our negative emotions, and we are extremely embarrassed that everyone at the beach can see these emotions. To not embarrass ourselves and to save face, we quickly run out in the water and bury our beach ball below the water. Now these beach balls are buoyant. But with the right amount of force and the right amount of balance, we can get that ball under the water, lock in our elbows, and keep it there. At that moment, we look like everyone else. We are smiling and talking. All is right with the world. Until. Someone distracts us from this balance of the hidden beach ball under the water and just for an instant we shift our hands or our elbows, hardly even noticeable to us. But at that very moment, the delicate balance has been disturbed, and we all know what happens next.

The ball comes rushing to the surface, explodes through the water, and clobbers the poor souls next to us. They never knew what hit them. Sometimes that beach ball comes rushing up and hits us, and we feel overwhelmed and incapacitated almost immediately. We feel like this because we have stored and hidden these negative emotions for so long even we had forgotten them. It is also important to remember that when that beach ball comes to the surface, it is propelled by its own power. We no longer have control of it. People who use repression as a way to deal with their negative emotions run the risk of — at any moment — being a victim to a powerful, emotional force in their life that often feels overwhelming and incapacitating.

> ***"There is danger in resorting to suppression as your only way to manage negative emotions."***

Seepage

The second picture about repression has to do with my house. I own an old house in Holland, Mich., that has almost no insulation. Come winter, the snows fall and the heat rushing through my roof melts the snow, and the water winds its way down to the eaves. But when this melted snow reaches the eave, it forms into thick, long icicles and an ice ridge. It runs the length of my house.

Once that ice forms, the remaining melted snow comes down the roof, but has no way to be released. It lies there on my roof day upon day, week upon week. And it doesn't matter how good a roof I have, sooner or later that melted snow seeps through the roof and into my house. The damage begins. Windows warp, ceilings get stained, and rafters rot. Repressed negative emotions cause the same damage.

Confession *is* good for the soul

When we block them up by refusing to express them or talk about them, they begin to seep their way into our lives, into our thoughts, and into our attitudes. We become warped human beings. The damage is done from the inside. Our personalities and perspectives become negative, bitter, and crusty. And all this is because we didn't know how or we were afraid to deal with our negative emotions in a direct and open way. Repression can be costly to us and our loved ones.

Finally, we can deal with our negative emotions through **confession.** To confess the existence of anger, jealousy, or frustration means we begin to put our feelings into words instead of into actions. We can *talk* out our feelings rather than *act* out our feelings. We can label them and begin to discuss them. When we begin to talk about our feelings, we are better able to control them and manage our behaviour. Confession of feelings allows us to decrease the intensity of the feeling, decrease the duration the negative feelings intrudes in our life, and decrease the frequency with which that feeling keeps coming back in our life creating distress.

"When we begin to talk about our feelings, we are better able to control them and manage our behaviour."

Talk about your feelings — especially the negative ones. Do so with regularity and confidence. Communication is the life-blood of all relationships. Far too many relationships are spoiled by hidden feelings and attitudes. Scripture tell us to put away all anger, malice, and rancor. This means we are to talk through our negative emotions with our loved one and find resolutions and solutions to our problems, thereby living more effectively and spiritually.

Anger is not to be hidden or feared. It is positive in that it aids us in fighting injustice and in creating change. But it is negative if it is directed at people or hidden and stored in our lives. Don't be a reactor with your feelings in which you act them out and display them negatively. Become a responder in which you disclose and reveal your emotions to one another.

As Ephesians 4:15 (LB) suggests, "We will lovingly follow the truth at all times — speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly — and so become more and more in every way like Christ."

Randall Johnson is co-ordinator and psychologist of the Pine Rest Counselling and Consultation Services in Holland, Michigan. He has been on staff at Pine Rest since 1986 when he changed his private practice to a Pine Rest satellite clinic. His professional specialties are marital therapy, affective disorders, and adolescent issues. Johnson is an active speaker on a variety of mental health topics. He and his wife, Linda Sue, have three children.

This article first appeared in Pine Rest Today, *Summer 1990, published by Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, Mich. Used with permission.*

News Feature

Conference explores 'Men and women: partners in the Gospel'

Marian Van Til

Several week-ends ago my husband and I attended a conference in Grand Rapids, Mich., sponsored by the Committee for Women in the Christian Reformed Church (CW-CRC). This conference, said the group's brochure, was meant to provide "education, instruction, mutual support, worship, friendship," and featured by way of its theme "a search for the meaning of partnership."

CW-CRC supports the recent Christian Reformed Church synod's decision to open all church offices to women and it offers seminary scholarships to women who need them.

Since Calvinist Contact *has never before covered any of this group's activities, it was decided I should go and report on the conference. It featured one well-known Reformed scholar, Dr. Nick Wolterstorff, as the keynote speaker, a worship leader, Rev. Claire Wolterstorff (an Episcopal priest and Nick's wife), and two four-person panels of church workers and pastors, male and female.*

Rather than writing at length about my own reactions to the conference I have presented below the gist of the main address, letting readers ponder for themselves the points Wolterstorff made about this issue which has occupied the CRC for 20 years. I will say, however, that I felt the CW-CRC's emphasis on partnership *between men and women helps it maintain a balanced perspective, which was evident in the types of discussion comments offered by conference attendees and in the fact that many of the attendees were men.*

Shalom: flourishing in all dimensions of one's existence

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — "There's a poignant 'betweenness' in the lives of those in the Christian Reformed Church right now," surmised Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff in an after-dinner speech. "We are between the time of approval and ratification of a synodical decision that opens all the church's offices to women. But we are also 'between' in a larger context — between the collapse of an old way of men and women relating to each other and the emerging of a new way."

Wolterstorff is a philosophy professor at Yale University, a former professor at Calvin College, and was the keynote speaker at a Nov. 9-10 "Partnership in the Gospel" conference sponsored by the Committee for Women in the Christian Reformed Church (CW-CRC). While some CRC members are afraid of where their church is headed, the group of 300 conference attendees examined possible sources of that fear and were told there is reason to celebrate if they embrace a biblical vision of justice and *shalom*.

The sponsoring CW-CRC is "an independent group of persons concerned with the role of women in the church" who believe "that the ordination of women to ecclesiastical office is the Spirit-filled outcome of the teachings of Scripture." Therefore, their ultimate objective is "the equal participation of both women and men in the life of the church," says Joan Flikkema, CW-CRC's executive secretary.

The committee organizes such conferences every few years for the benefit of members and anyone who wishes to join them. This conference focused on the meaning of full partnership in the Gospel for women and men.

Women pass on the faith

After observing that the CRC is between two eras, Wolterstorff described his own spiritual formation, described why, in his view, the old order of male-female relations is breaking up, why there's resistance to that break-up, and what church members can look forward to if they embrace the biblical notions of justice and *shalom*.

"Women were enormously important in the handing on of the Christian Gospel to me," asserted Wolterstorff. After the death of his mother when he was three years old, an aunt and his paternal grandmother "who had a deep piety I can't even describe" formed his spiritual life. Along with them were Sunday school, Vacation Bible School and missionfests, all staffed and organized by women.

"None of these women ever preached," said Wolterstorff — "or at least, not what was *recognized* as preaching." He noted that in his CRC experience, the men handed on the Gospel "officially" but "non-revealingly," i.e., impersonally. "If the men did reveal their appropriation of the Gospel, it was in 'talking theology,'" said Wolterstorff.

In noting the difference between the "official" voice of the men and the "unofficial, second, but most important voice" of the women, Wolterstorff reminded conferees of the astonishing fact which a conference organizer, Lillian Grissen, had earlier pointed out: that Reformed Bible College, Elim Christian School [for the handicapped], Bethany Christian Home and Pine Rest Christian Hospital were all begun or conceived by women. But once these institutions had gained respectability "men were chosen to lead them."

A 'yes' and a 'no'

In analysing the break-up of the "old order" of male/female relationships, Wolterstorff noted that opponents of opening all church offices to women "like to say that feminism has influenced us and they reject feminism out of hand."

"They're right; secular feminism *has* influenced us, just as secular capitalist ideas have effected those who consider themselves conservatives," he noted. Such critics would do well to remember that "the main Reformed tradition, back to the Reformation, said that on all cultural and social movements one must pronounce both a 'yes' and a 'no.'"

"Why has feminism come to the fore?" Wolterstorff asked. "There's a social reason. The outside boundaries which defined and confined people — race, colour, religion, ethnic group, gender — have fallen down. Now we ask, "Is a

Continued on page 13 ...

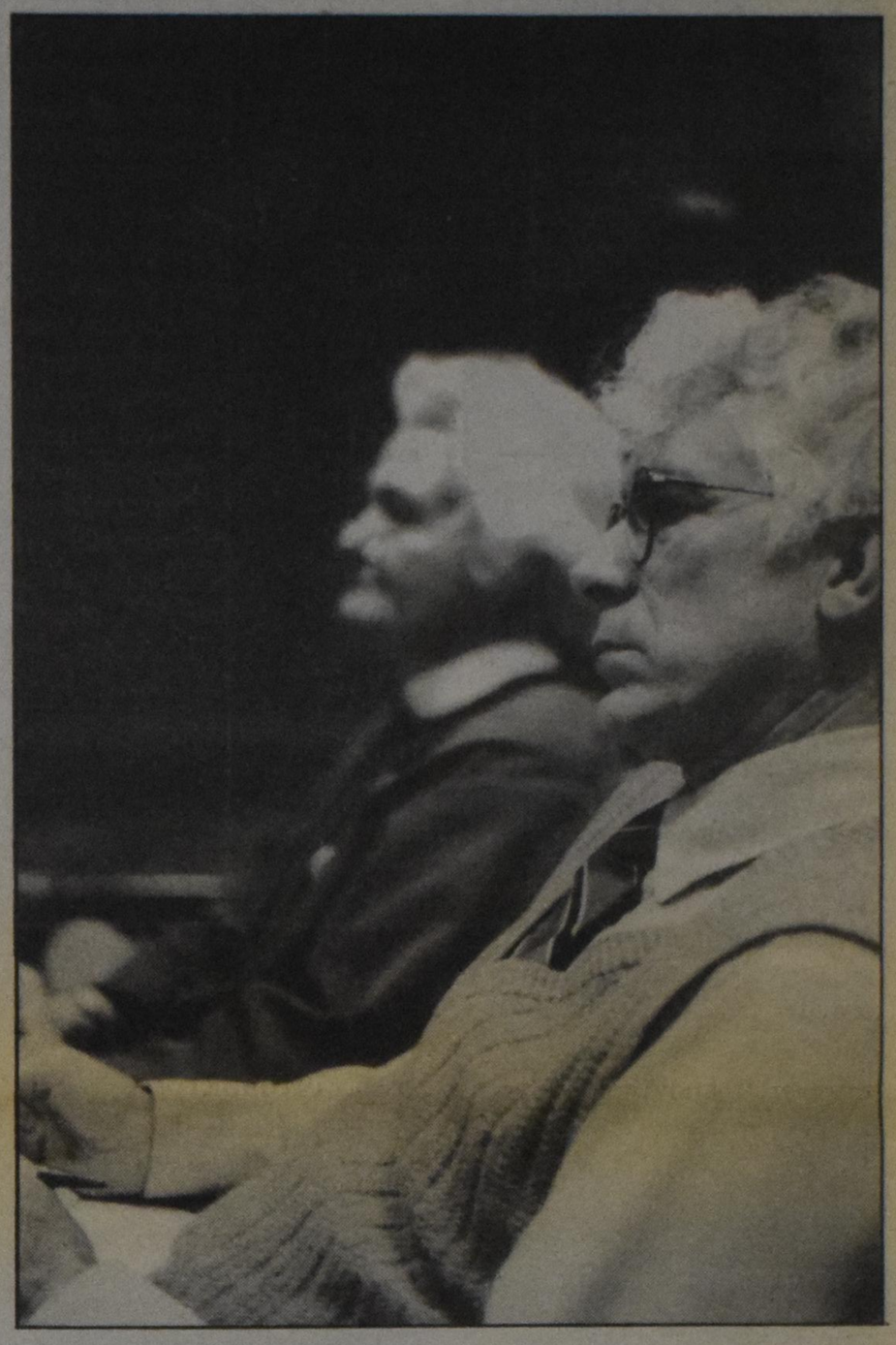


Photo: Marian Van Til

Keynote speaker Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff and Rev. Claire Wolterstorff listen intently to panelists.

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'Partnership in the Gospel' conference discusses *shalom*, justice

... continued from page 12.

person competent? We can rise above those boundaries. Many of the Dutch, for example, who were farmers for centuries in the Netherlands were farmers because they *had* to be, but they have escaped being farmers here. That pattern [of social change] cannot be stopped at a certain point, and we should be immensely thankful for that."

"Calvin said the Spirit of God is brooding over humanity" which allows us to acknowledge and use what is good from all those movements. "And the example Calvin gives of that is Greek philosophy!" Wolterstorff noted. "He doesn't pronounce a blanket judgment. Over and over cultural movements have taught us to read our Bible differently and better. Why should that be alarming? Now, the only qualification for being one in Christ is faith, Galatians 3 says."

Unclean

Wolterstorff feels that the resistance to the ordination of women is "in good measure a struggle by us males to hang on to power, coupled with *fear* on our part. But there are always a few passages of Scripture that come up also," he observed. However, "[study] committee after committee has said the conservative interpretation was not compelling," he argued.

"So why do they hang on to their view?" He answered his own question: "Fear of a three-century-long reinterpretation of the Bible: if you changed your mind at any point there would never again be a point at which you can dig in your heels. It's like being on a slippery stainless steel slide."

Wolterstorff feels that not even that may be the deepest source of the issue, however. "There is a deeply mysterious element in human beings that causes us to categorize things as clean and unclean," he said.

" 'What's *wrong* with eating pork?' I may ask Jews. They may not be able to give reasons except that God said so in the Old Testament and the practice makes them feel a deep revulsion. 'What's wrong with women preaching?' we may ask. We used to say women were too emotional, but now [no one] says that. Conservatives say 'God just said no' because [they feel] a deep irrational revulsion at the very prospect; that in some deep way it violates our sense of the wholesome/loathsome, clean/unclean, order/chaos."

Casting away fear

"The ultimate theological answer is something different," asserted Wolterstorff. "Jesus presented a new model of holy community, not one that keeps itself holy by exclusion of the unclean — but one that works, like he did, in all the alleys of the world, with people while they're still broken, inviting them to share in the community while they're struggling to be whole."

Wolterstorff explained how the "search for justice and peace," the conference's theme, is embodied by the church. "*Shalom* is not just the absence of conflict; it is flourishing in all dimensions of one's existence," he explained. "And an indescribable dimension of that *shalom* is justice."

"Justice doesn't just involve 'my rights' which we encounter in the Anglo-Saxon way of thinking," said Wolterstorff. "The Bible gives justice a different contour. It means that the 'other' in my midst puts a claim on me. Justice is always connected with the right to be brought fully into community — that's why the Bible speaks so much about treatment of the widows and orphans. Are marginalized people being brought back in?"

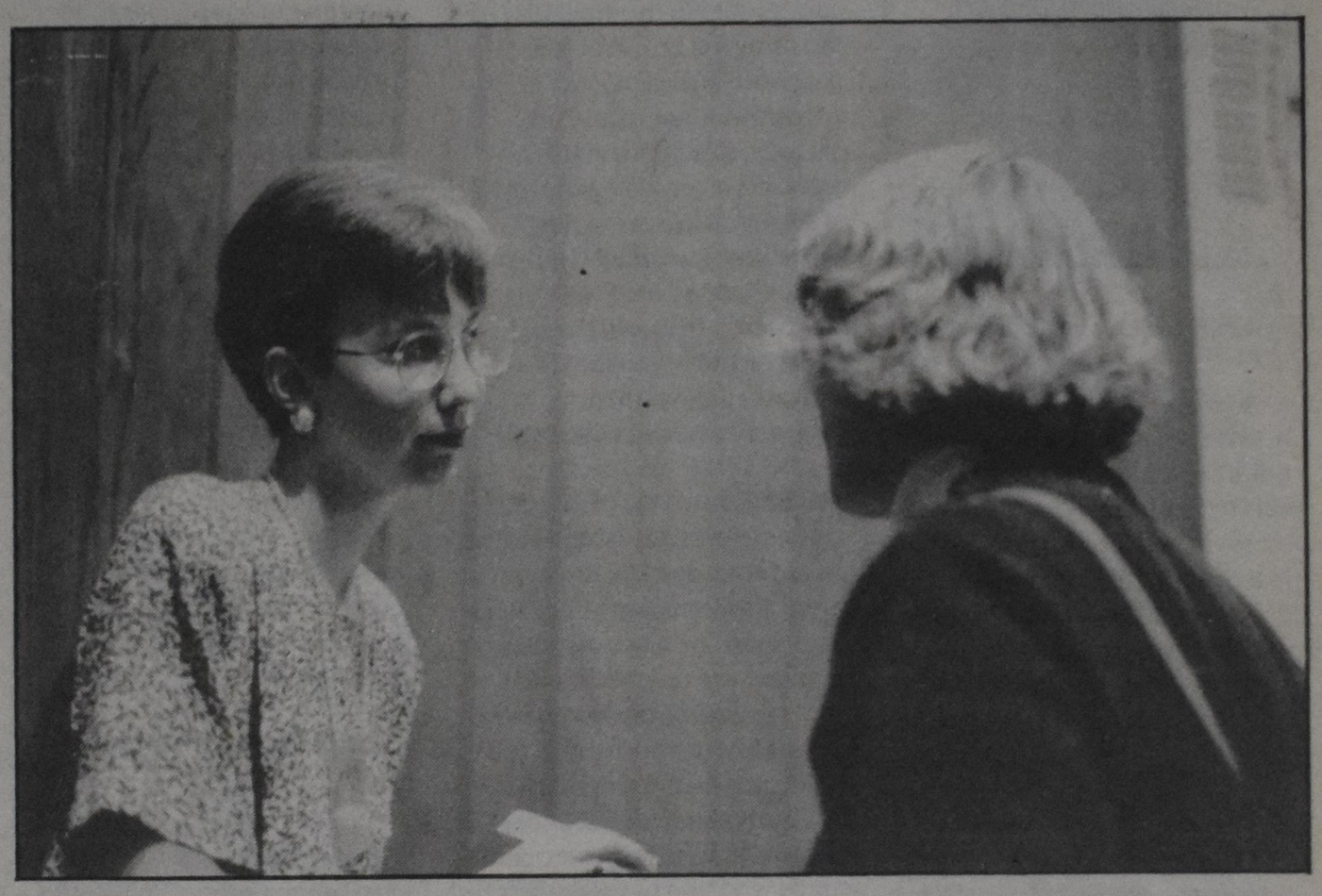

Photo: Marian Van Til

Conference panelist Rev. Laura Smit (l) talks with Alice Greidanus of Grand Rapids. Laura graduated from Calvin Seminary in 1987 and brought an appeal to synod challenging the seminary's refusal to grant her ministerial candidate status. She argued that she had completed all requirements which lead to such candidacy. Her appeal was denied, since upholding it would have contravened the CRC's current Church Order. But ironically, Smit, a gifted and compelling speaker, received a standing ovation from delegates.

Laura is now pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Clayton, New Jersey, where, she notes, "I am the conservative one," and where she relishes the job of keeping church members "who may be experimenting with dangerous ideas" from "stepping over the edge."

Smit urged conferees to refrain from caricaturing or dismissing CRC members who are more conservative than they.

Wolterstorff told his audience that that kind of "biblical caring" must permeate their faith. "We must work for it, struggle for it, seek to embody it in your community. We must especially pray for it because we can't bring it about by ourselves. And we must celebrate the traces of it we find — Christians are not grim; break out the champagne. But we must also lament the absence of shalom and justice, even with those who don't know how, or don't want to, or don't know they should," he said.

"Partnership [between men and women] is part of that multifaceted caring," asserted Wolterstorff. "There are two ways to understand partnership," he went on. "You can struggle to remove all our differences; or, through our differences see that it makes no difference for anybody — we bring our differences *into* that body."

"We men and women have been created and recreated differently: we must prize our particularities. The church has overlooked the particularities that women bring to the church, to appropriating the Gospel. What we don't need is everybody trying to sing bass. What we need is each voice in the chorus."

"Listening to those particularities will prove awkward, painful — and revelatory. We men have to learn to listen to how women read the Bible and how they appropriate it. Not that they are always right, but that we need both voices to arrive at a better reading."

> *"What we don't need is everybody trying to sing bass."*

Photo: Marian Van Til

Committee for Women (CW-CRC) executive director Joan Flikkema (l) talks with conferees, many of whom were middle-aged or older.

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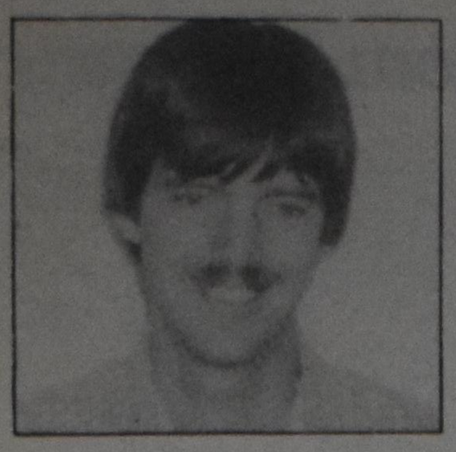

Syd Hielema

The pulpit/piano news broadcast

A couple of weeks ago I heard one of the more unusual news broadcasts of my life. It was structured in the form of a worship service and took place in a church building in downtown Toronto. The order of worship included plenty of singing, prayer, Scripture reading, and a collection (of course), but the main part (you know, where the sermon goes) was actually a news broadcast.

There were two "announcers": Jim Wallis has been part of a Christian community in the inner city of Washington D.C. for many years and is the editor of *Sojourners* magazine; his partner, Ken Medema, is a pianist/singer/composer (two of his songs are in the new Christian Reformed Church hymnal) associated with Briarpatch Music in the U.S. Between the pulpit and the piano the two of them presented a news broadcast.

Personal involvement

The news stories that Wallis shared sounded like any typical big city's front page, but there was a twist: he was personally involved with each story he told. He told of the teenager in his neighbourhood murdered because of his drug involvements. He told of the refugees in Central American camps who had to teach their North American "helpers" the meaning of joyful living. He explained how the black prisoners in South African jails sing songs of encouragement while one of their number is led to the execution block.

Medema didn't add more news stories. He was more like the colour commentator on hockey broadcasts; except that he did his "commentating" to music and invited everyone to sing with him after a song's chorus had become familiar.

So what are these guys trying to prove? What were they importing into Canada that we couldn't get from Peter Mansbridge or Lloyd Robertson?

Don't lower the coffin yet

Wallis/Medema would give a one-word answer to these questions: vision. "Without a vision the people perish," began Wallis, and then they both went on to describe how they see an entire civilization perishing.

These two gentlemen weren't touring North America with their news broadcast because they get a kick out of ringing people's funeral bells. No, they presented passages from every corner of the Bible in an attempt to rekindle a vision in the hearts and minds of God's people gathered in Toronto that night. After digging a deep grave for our dying planet, they refused to lower the coffin.

"Look," they pointed out, "much of the Bible was written in societies driven by idolatry and greed. In these situations the word of the Lord came in statements like 'Let justice roll like mighty waters,' and 'True religion is this: care for the orphans and widows, and keep oneself from being polluted by the world.' These words from the Lord, and many others like them, must still be proclaimed in word and deed in the '90s."

I felt somewhat ambivalent driving home. Yes, I see a planet dying every time I turn on the news, but it still looks pretty good when I arrive home to my cozy neighbourhood. Maybe those media types are just out to sensationalize evil. Maybe it's not so bad. But those rationalizations didn't work so well. I think I know what I need instead: continued doses of vision building pulpits and pianos.

Syd Hielema studies at the Toronto School of Theology.

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Entertaining angels unawares?

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (EP) — An apparent rumor sweeping New Zealand and Australia says that angels, disguised as hitchhikers, are making mysterious visits to earthly car drivers to give them the message of Christ's imminent return.

"Are angels hitchhiking around New Zealand to get a heavenly message across to Kiwi Christians?" asked Brian Finn, a reporter with *Challenge Weekly*, a New Zealand publication.

"Numerous reports circulating like wildfire in New Zealand churches, and in some cases from the pulpit, say this is so. In the past month, *Challenge Weekly* has had no fewer than a dozen reports of angels catching lifts with Christians, and informing them about Christ's imminent return before mysteriously disappearing from the moving car," Finn wrote in the October 31 issue of the publication.

However, after investigating the reports, Finn reported that "the only problem is that there don't appear to be any eyewitnesses who can testify to actually having picked up one of these hitchhikers — and this reporter has made more than 40 inquiries to follow up the story. All accounts of the story seem to come from a close friend or relative, one or two informants back down the chain."

Finn also discovered that "inquiries to the Ministry of Transport in Taupo, Turangi, and Waiouru ... and the Wellington traffic department have also been fruitless. Not one traffic officer has experienced any such incident or heard the account, other than from a small number of Christians who have tried to verify the story."

Urban myth

Finn concluded that "the angelic hitchhiker is a version of the single most popular recorded urban legend, called 'the vanishing hitchhiker,' and has more in common with ghost stories than biblical prophecy." Finn made reference to the work of Professor Jan Harold Brunvand of the University of Utah, who has researched and compiled numerous "urban myths and legends" in his book, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker — American Urban Legends and Their Meanings.*

"Accounts in his book (one from Buffalo in 1972 and another from Arizona in 1978)," Finn wrote, "are almost identical to the stories circulating in New Zealand, and, like them, have no concrete evidence of ever having occurred."

A similar rumor has been circulating in Australia as well, and a minister there decided to track down its origins. The Rev. Phillip L. Powell, editor of the *Australian Evangel,* the monthly publication of the Australian Assemblies of God, wrote that: "I recently heard a story which stimulated my thinking about the first and second advents of our Lord Jesus. It was an unusual tale about two alleged 'angels,' disguised as well-dressed businessmen, who sat in the back of a car, announced that Jesus Christ was coming soon, and then disappeared. It was further alleged that two police officers explained to the stunned driver and her female passenger that similar incidents had been reported by six different car drivers on that particular stretch of road."

Powell did some investigating into the report. "The day after I heard the story I decided to initiate an 'angel' hunt. Because of time and cost constraints I elected to use the telphone. Commencing in Chinchilla, I was directed to Atherton, and thence to Mornington over to Canberra and Cowra, up to Brisbane and finally, to the Gold Coast, where the most rational and only firsthand explanation was given so far."

Only in Canada?

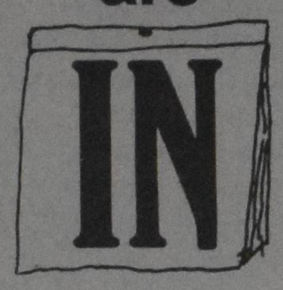
He continued, "Apparently, the story was started by a Canadian minister who, six months ago, visited Abundant Life Fellowship on the Gold Coast and told of the alleged angelic appearance (attested to by police officers) not in Australia, but in Saskatchewan. So far I haven't journeyed by telephone to Canada, but may do so as the search continues."

Powell sought to put an end to what he called the "rumor mill," concluding, "Now, I'm sufficiently 'Pentecostal' to give credence to the idea that those two angels from Saskatchewan could visit Australia's Gold Coast and repeat, verbatim, the Canadian experience, in this great south land of the Holy Spirit. However, I'm not so naive as to overlook the incredible power of auto-suggestion and the strength of the 'rumor mill,' even among Christians." However, Powell added, "If anyone out there has firsthand testimony of definite angel sightings, we'd love to hear from you."

Finn concluded his piece by saying, "There are three kinds of lies: black lies, white lies, and sermon illustrations." Finn urged that the story of the visiting angels is "one sermon illustration that should not be passed on — unless, of course, it happened to you."

Peter and Marja are IN

Photo: David Van Dyke



Dear P & M:

Could you recommend a church for us that is close in doctrine to the CRC but isn't Christian Reformed. We are looking for a church that accepts remarried divorced people.

My new husband and I have been married for almost a year and feel that God has blessed us greatly. Andrew (not his real name), my three children from my previous marriage and I are learning to live as a blended family. It's not always easy, but we can say that we're happy in every area of our lives.

At the same time we feel that something is missing. Mother's Day 1990, was the last day that we went to church. We want to go but something holds us back. We moved to another province for several reasons, but the main reason was to get away from the CRC community and Andrew's ex-wife who is still very bitter.

Is divorce ever forgiven in the CRC or any church or do we have to hang our heads in shame for the rest of our lives? We both believe that we have been forgiven by the Lord and that we've been given a second chance. We would never recommend divorce but it happened to us for various reasons.

I thought I was accepted by the people in my home church; in fact I know I was. I was involved as a volunteer for over 20 years both in the congregation and the Christian school which my kids attended. But something happened when I remarried. People didn't know what to say to me anymore.

Maybe we just need a fresh start. We'd rather not go to a CRC in our area because Andrew grew up here.

It is not easy to leave a church after a lifetime of membership. I feel like I'm going through another divorce.

Dear Remarried:

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman by the well he did not urge her to go back to any of her five previous husbands. He let her know that he was aware of her current situation and relationship. Then he simply invited her to worship in spirit and in truth.

This is the kind of invitation that the Lord also extends to you. In fact, you need the fellowship of God's people and the experiences of worshipping the one who gives people second chances and new beginnings!

Your own denomination studied the matter of divorce and remarriage and urged the churches to deal with divorced persons in the same way as they deal with those who live with a "deep grief." With respect to remarriage, pastors and consistories were instructed to help couples deal with "personal failure in the breakdown of the previous marriage, forgiveness of others, understanding of the divinely intended permanence of marriage, and a renewed dependence on the grace of God for the success of the remarriage" (Acts of Synod, 1980, pp. 483-4).

Unfortunately, some congregations do not seem to be aware of synod's pastoral guidelines. A letter like yours reveals the personal hurt that results when churches judge and push away when they are called to forgive and embrace.

Your withdrawal is understandable. You are angry and hurt and not inclined to return to your denomination. But you are hurting yourself by self-deprivation. You need community. You need acceptance. You need to forgive as you hope to be forgiven. Otherwise you, too, will be locked in bitterness.

Consider, too, that what you desperately wanted in your home church was a second chance. In all fairness, you should also give your denomination a second chance. Remember, too, that the way people dealt with you was often due to awkwardness based on their own ignorance of how to deal with your kind of pain.

Make some discrete inquiries about the CRC churches and pastors in your area. Try to discover which congregation has been able to accept divorced and remarried persons into their fellowship. Then go and introduce yourself without necessarily explaining your whole story. Let people accept you as you are. Don't let your own defensiveness short circuit potential new friendships. You don't have to wear your story on your sleeve for all to see. Give details at appropriate times to the right people.

One divorce is enough to bear. With respect to church life, we also would not recommend going through another separation. That's why we plead with you to make a new beginning *within* the Christian Reformed Church.

We have written you separately with information about a church in your area which has a reputation for accepting persons in your situation. We pray that you will find the love of Christ among his people.

Dear Readers:

Is this a common experience? Is this how it really is for people who divorce or remarry?

How would you respond to her? What would you say to persons and couples who despair of ever finding acceptance and forgiveness in their church?

We hope to hear from many of you and then we will publish a composite of all your responses.

Write to:
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Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til.

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News

Christian association helps businesses deal with economic hard times

Photo: C.C. files

Hans Vanderstoep is director of the Reformed Christian Business and Professional Organization.

Alison de Groot

DUNDAS, Ont. — Bankrupt!

Ontario bankruptcies up 112 per cent.

Those were the headlines last week on the front pages and in the business sections of Ontario's papers. Statistics showed the number of insolvencies across Canada for the first 10 months of 1990 were already worse than the total for all of 1982, the worst year on record.

In Ontario, the number of personal and business bankruptcies more than doubled last month compared to a year ago. High interest rates coupled with the economic downturn leave many analysts suggesting that this recession may be deeper than expected.

The national number of bankruptcies is up 61 per cent to 5,922, from 3,687 in October 1989 according to a report released by the federal Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The report told of 4,773 personal bankruptcies and 1,149 businesses with debts of $328 million which declared themselves insolvent.

Reformed perspective

"Numbers like these just exacerbate the gun-shy feeling of lenders," says Catherine Swift, chief economist at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. She adds that banks and near-banks are the primary source of financing for about 85 per cent of small businesses in Canada.

Hans Vanderstoep, head of the Reformed Christian Business and Professional Organization (RCBPO), says the high numbers also reflect a changing attitude towards bankruptcy. "The stigma of bankruptcy is gone; people are more willing to declare bankruptcy," says Vanderstoep, adding that the RCBPO is attempting to deal with that change in attitude and counsel those who face financial difficulty and bankruptcy.

The RCBPO began in 1985 and over 400 businesses and individuals from various Reformed backgrounds and denominations make up its membership.

The RCBPO's conflict resolution system was originally set up to offer counselling, advice and input for businesspeople and professionals facing financial conflict. However, in these times, Vanderstoep says, the system is being used more and more by people facing bankruptcy. "Because most of our members are [involved in] small businesses, (bankruptcy) often affects whole families," explains Vanderstoep, adding that RCBPO can offer support and advice from a perspective similar to the members' own. Vanderstoep says this approach often differs from a banker's, for example, who may only look at a situation on paper.

Vanderstoep admits some Christian businesspeople feel strongly about bankruptcy and may have a different attitude towards debts but says there can be many reasons for financial difficulties. "A business can just be doing badly, but often someone else brings you down," he notes. Many smaller businesses today are involved in construction, development or real estate, which means they are affected by the failure of larger businesses," explains Vanderstoep. "A business in heating, for example, could be contracted for a development company, but houses aren't selling so the heating company isn't being paid by the larger company and it goes down too."

Reformed Christian businesspeople are "often very private people," and that adds to the burden, says Vanderstoep. "We need to learn to share more." However, the RCBPO is getting more calls from businesses looking for support and advice as the recession settles in, and more calls from individuals fed up with secular employers and looking for jobs within a Christian environment. Vanderstoep says the RCBPO placed two such individuals recently.

Netherlands Bazaar gears up to send out Christmas food packages

UNIONVILLE, Ont. — In 1954 a Dutch Christian family was going through a time of great need; they desperately needed to raise money to survive. Fellow Christians and friends rallied to their cause and a bazaar was organized. Donations and profits from the bazaar totalled $1,000 by the time it was over. Those involved thought this might be a great idea to keep in mind the next time a needy family wanted help.

Ge Spaans thinks it still is a great idea. She is the chairperson of the Netherlands Bazaar Committee.

Spaans became involved with the Netherlands Bazaar in 1959, selling articles in one of the booths. The first official Netherlands Bazaar had been just two years earlier, in 1957, but after the '59 bazaar organizers dediced to hold one every two years and the money raised would be distributed to extremely needy families of Dutch descent.

Thirty years later, the Netherlands Bazaar is a year-round job for a committee of 11 dedicated women. The selection, distribution and the bazaar itself involves over 300 people. "Everyone knows us," says Spaans of committee members, "we're always around begging!"

Although there was no bazaar this year, committee members are busy selecting deserving families and packaging food parcels in time to be delivered for the Christmas season, with the remaining proceeds of last year's efforts. Spaans says so far this year they expect to send at least 412 food packages worth about $90 each. The packages contain such typically Dutch treats as dropjes, soup, sausage, applesauce and chocolate hail.

"We like to give things that needy families could never afford. The items have to be non-perishable. Besides, you can go and buy bread. We want these families to have good food for the holidays," explains Spaans.

Not nickels and dimes

This year's food packages are being paid for from the proceeds of 1989's bazaar which earned about $89,000. In December of '89, 458 packages were sent or delivered at a cost of $33,000. This past summer another $17,000 was used to send 108 needy children to a Christian summer camp. Spaans believes this year's food supplies will use up the remainder of the 1989 bazaar funds, "We'll need another good year for next year's bazaar," says Spaans.

Spaans explains that the bazaar itself is held only every second year because of the amount of work involved in organizing it and selecting and distributing goods or opportunities for the underprivileged. "Besides," Spaans adds, "we're too embarrassed to go knocking on the doors of businesses every year!" Businesses are canvassed for financial donations and assistance in products or services.

'It's a mess out there'

The selection of families to receive goods for the Netherlands Bazaar is done in the strictest of confidence, according to Spaans. Letters from the committee are sent to the deacons and ministers of many churches which have Dutch immigrant members, asking the churches to submit names of the needy. The criteria for names or families to be submitted is strict only out of necessity, says Spaans. The family must be of Dutch extraction in Ontario and in "extreme need." "you can't imagine the need out there. We have to have limitations and we have to be selective because there are so many who need help. We want to make sure we're helping where it's needed most," says Spaans.

Spaans points out that all the money raised by the bazaar goes to these needy families and that everyone involved with the organization is a volunteer. "No one minds the work; it's very gratifying especially when you get a letter from a child you don't know, thanking you for the chance to go to camp and learn about Jesus."

"It's a mess out there," concludes Spaans. "without Christ it would be unbearable."

Writers' conference sharpens skills

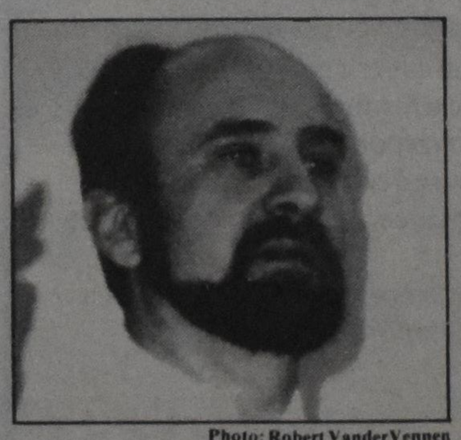

Photo: Robert VanderVennen

C.C. contributor Paul De Groot

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO — Behind the increasingly important evangelical Christian press in Canada are the Christian writers, and behind them are training programs which help them write effectively. The recent seventh annual Christian Writers' Conference organized by *Faith Today* magazine helped 133 writers develop their craft on the campus of Ontario Bible College.

Sessions on writing news stories, novels, magazine features, nonfiction books, short stories, Sunday school take-home papers, and more, were included. Professional writers, beginners and freelancers all found a place in groups led by successful practitioners.

Alberta writer Maxine Hancock in her three plenary talks stressed that writers must earn the right to be read through their craftsmanship, integrity and being in touch with our times. Intensive four-hour mini-courses were taught by Karen Homer, Larry Matthews and Paul De Groot for people with different levels of expertise.

Jane MacGillvary taught a course for freelancers on marketing their writing, and Nick and Joy Hunter worked with writers of creative pieces. Ron Rempel spoke on ethics in journalism and Doug Koop talked about writing news and opinion pieces. And there were many other workshops as well.

Plans are already underway for next year's conference, which again is expected to draw people throughout Canada who wish to contribute through writing to a Christian voice in Canada.

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Birthday

Congratulations to Margaret (Grietje) Hofland on the occasion of her 80th birthday, Dec. 11, 1990.

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MARGARET (Grietje) HOFLAND

on her 80th birthday on Dec. 11, 1990.
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Anniversaries

Congratulations to Folkert and Anna Bergsma (nee Brouwer) who will celebrate, D.V., their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 27, 1990.

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Congratulations to

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(nee Brouwer)

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Jerry & Dianne — St. Catharines, Ont.
Bouwe & Jennie — St. Catharines, Ont.
Teresa & Joe Boone — Picture Butte, Alta.
Don & Mary — St. Catharines, Ont.
John & Margann — Chatham, Ont.
33 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren.
Open house will be held from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 1, 1990, at Calvin Memorial Chr. School, St. Catharines, Ont.
Best wishes only please.
Home address: 178 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L9

Thunder Bay, Ont. Salmon Arm, B.C.
1955 December 16 1990
"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways" (Ps. 128:1).
With praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, we are happy to announce the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

KOR and AUDREY MULLER
(nee Vis)

May God bless you and be with you in the years to come.
Much love from your children and grandchildren:
Peter & Marilyn Muller — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Chris, Jennifer
Lucy & Peter Breel — Calgary, Alta.
Joey, Michael, David, Lorena
Edith & Dave DeBoer — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Carolyn, Harmen, Kasey, Alyssa
Dirk & Rita Muller — Surrey, B.C.
Cory, Nicole
Glenda & Bill Taylor — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Darin, Cody
Corinne & Steve Jagt — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Ryan, Kimberly, Amanda, Kevin
Raymon Muller — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Lori-Ann & Bill Rennie — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Cheri
Lisa Muller — at home
Home address: 1780 Auto Road S.E., Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4M9

Anniversaries

1955 December 9 1990
The Lord united

BILL and MARGARET COLYN
(nee Knegt)

in marriage 35 years ago. They have continually turned to him for guidance. He has always been there for them. We thank the Lord for the love and faithfulness he has shown to our parents. We praise the Lord too for our parents, and the love and care they have always shown us and our children.
May the Lord continue to be gracious and grant mom and dad many more years together!
Congratulations from:
Joe & Joanne Colyn — Woodstock, Ont.
Justin, Christopher, Lauren, Erika
Margaret & Theo Hoekstra — Orange City, Iowa
Darrell, Katrina
James Colyn — Sapporo, Japan
Anita & Ron Prange — Sarnia, Ont.
Luke
Dorothy & Rudy Van Amelsvoort — Welland, Ont.
Jason
Sylvia & Isaac Van Geest — Grimsby, Ont.
John, Gregory
David Colyn — Wellandport, Ont.
Home address: P.O. Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

Enschede, (the Neth.) Nepean, Canada
1930 November 27 1990
With thankfulness to the Lord, we are announcing the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

PIETER and MARIA EUVERMAN
(nee Schonewille)

We pray that God will continue to keep them in his care and bless them in the years to come.
Ralph & Wilma — Nepean, Ont.
children and grandchildren
Ann & Albert — Brockville, Ont.
and daughter
Fennie & George — Washington, N.J.
and children
Joan & Rolly — Nepean, Ont.
and children
Open house will be held at Viewmont Chr. Home, (Common Room), 220 Viewmont Dr., Nepean, Ont.
Home address: 111-220 Viewmont Dr., Nepean, ON K2E 7M5

No Church News this week.

Obituaries

On Nov. 4, 1990, the Lord called to his eternal home our dearly beloved husband, father and grandfather,

DIRK DOUWES

at the age of 66.
"Blessed assurance Jesus is mine."
Lovingly remembered by his wife Idske Douwes (nee Bakker)
and his children:
John & Maria — Ottawa
Kees & Diana — London
Hennie & George — Avonmore
Douglas & Heather — Essex
Peter & Joyce — Ayre
Frances — Sarnia
Anita & Mel — Wyoming
Dennis & Annette — Sarnia
Jennifer & Floyd — Sarnia
Richard — Wyoming
Loving "Pake" of 19 grandchildren.
Funeral service for Dirk was held Nov. 7, 1990, at the Chr. Ref. Church of Wyoming with Rev. J. Van Dijk and Rev. J. Nutma officiating.
Correspondence address: 551 Brooke St., Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0

GRIETINA (Grace) MARIA OLTHOF

went to be with her Lord and Saviour on Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1990, in her 87th year.
May the Lord give comfort to those she left behind.
Youth of Yesterday
Orillia, Ont.

After a lengthy illness the Lord in his mercy took home,

FENNY (Feikje) RIEDSTRA
(nee Hoekstra)

at the age of 77.
Survived by her loving husband of over 54 years, Andrew and nine children:
Eva Hofstede — Chatham
Thomas & Ann Riedstra — Norval
Teena & Homer Vandervecht — Leamington
Diane & Harry Roffel — Chatham
Jane Riedstra — Chatham
Gary & Chila Riedstra — Chatham
Jacqueline & Jenne Looper — London
Annette & Ken Jordan — London
Francine & Leslie Badder — Wabash
Also surviving are 21 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. She is predeceased by one son-in-law Hank Hofstede and three grandchildren.
Correspondence address: 14 Willowmac Ave., Chatham, ON N7M 1Y9

Obituaries

On Nov. 3, 1990, God called into his presence our much loved children, grandchildren, brother and sister,

MARK and CAROLE SAMPLONIUS
(nee Roorda)

in their 25th and 23rd years, respectively, as a result of a tragic accident at Fairview, Alta.
Carole and Mark were united in marriage on Sept. 1, 1990.
"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you" (Ps. 139:16-18), text chosen by the families for the message prepared by the Rev. Dirk Miedema for the funeral service which he led at the Clinton Chr. Ref. Church, Nov. 8, 1990.
The parents:
Dick & Eva Roorda — Clinton, Ont.
Homer & Pearl Samplonius — Brampton, Ont.
The brothers and sisters:
David Roorda — Waterloo, Ont.
Robert Roorda — Waterloo, Ont.
Brandon Roorda — Clinton, Ont.
David Samplonius — Brampton, Ont.
Anne Samplonius — Edmonton, Alta.
Sarah Samplonius — London, Ont.
Paul Samplonius — Brampton, Ont.
Grandparents:
Mrs. Dingena Verhoef — Clinton, Ont.
Jacob & Reintje Roorda — St. Catharines, Ont.
Rev. & Mrs. Cecil & Annie Tuininga — Edmonton, Alta.
Mrs. Betty Samplonius — Abbotsford, B.C.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1).

WILLIAM SLUYS SR.

On Oct. 31, 1990, in his 84th year, the Lord took to himself our dearly beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.
Wilma Sluys — Chatham
Bill & Hetty — Chatham
John & Mary Vanderleeuw — Mount Forest
Harry & Linda Chatham
Ted & Lena — Greensville
Matt & Ruth Anne — Orillia
Kees & Lena Schenk — Chatham
Elfert & Alice — Chatham
Correspondence address: 40 Elm St., Apt. 322, Chatham, ON N7M 6A5

For Sale

For sale: 200 farrow to finish hog farm, with two living quarters, in Fraser Valley, B.C. Inquiries: Box 3900, Chilliwack Progress, 45860 Spadina Ave., Chilliwack, BC V2P 6H9

Miscellaneous

CHECK YOUR MAILBOX
for the CRC Publications Christmas brochure, featuring "Presents with Presence." We sent a copy to every CRC household, but if you did not receive one or want extra copies, call us toll-free at **1-800-263-4252** (CDA) or **1-800-333-8300** (U.S.) and we'll get one in the mail that same day. Don't miss your chance to order meaningful presents that will be remembered long after the season ends.

For Rent

For rent: Three-bedroom home in Grimsby, Ont. Available Jan. 1, 1991. Call (416) 945-9454 any time.

Miscellaneous

THE
Family Christian Bookstore
750 Guelph Line
(Opposite the Burlington Mall)
Burlington, ON
L7R 3N5
Phone: (416) 637-9151
9 a.m. - 9 p.m. till Christmas

Personal

"Gezelligheid kent geen tijd!"
Tall, active lady, early fifties, sincerely hoping to meet Christian gentleman for companionship (Niagara area). Please reply to File #2553, c/o Calvinist Contact, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter & Marja can be found on page 15.

Classified

Help Wanted

Social service work: Mutual Support Systems, a network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, invites applications for the position of **Child Care Worker.** The responsibilities of this live-in position include involvement in the educational programming of the residents, scheduling daily routines, as well as planning special events, all in a family setting. In-service training provides an excellent opportunity for personal growth and skill development at role modelling positive relationships and facilitating the resident's successes. Position includes salary and benefits package. Please submit resume to Personnel Manager, Mutual Support Systems, R.R.1, Perry Rd., Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0. Telephone: (416) 899-2311.

Beacon Christian High School
requires a
SCHOOL COUNSELLOR
6 hours/month
Minimum qualifications: Masters level. Responsible for individual student counselling, assessment and staff resource.
Send resume and statement of philosophy to: **The Principal, Beacon Christian High School, 2 O'Malley Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7**

Teacher

BRESLAU, Ont.: Woodland Chr. High School is accepting applications for a part-time position which begins Jan. 30, 1991. This position will meet three classes every other day:
1. **Grade 10 Science; advanced;**
2. **Grade 10 Science, advanced/general**
3. **Grade 12 Physical Ed./Health**

Please apply in writing with a resume to Education Committee, WCHS, R.R.#1, Breslau, ON N0B 1M0. Phone: (519) 648-2114

WILLIAMSBURG, Ont.: Timothy Christian School of Williamsburg, Ont., will need a full-time **Grade 3 & 4** teacher for 24 pupils, starting Jan. 7, 1991, D.V. Our present teacher is leaving because of pregnancy. This position could lead to continued employment for the following school year. Teachers are asked to send their letter of application and their resume a.s.a.p. to: Mr. James Kooistra, Principal of T.C.S., R.R.#1, Williamsburg, ON K0C 2H0 or phone (613) 535-2687 (school) or (613) 535-2152 (home).

Real Estate

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Miscellaneous

Shopping for the person who has everything? Don't spend hours looking through stores and catalogues to find a unique Christmas present. Give a gift certificate from CRC Publications. Just call our toll-free number, specify the amount, and we'll promptly send a gift certificate and our complete catalogue — either to you or directly to the recipient. Call Neil at **1-800-263-4252** (CDA) or Arlyn at **1-800-333-8300** (U.S.).

Save money by using the classifieds.

Teacher

Trinity Christian School
Burlington, Ont.,
is looking for a
TEACHING PRINCIPAL
for August 1991.
We are an interdenominational K-8 school with 154 students. Applications will be accepted until *Jan. 18, 1991.* Please send a complete resume and references to:

SEARCH COMMITTEE
c/o Trinity Christian School
650 Walkers Line, Burlington, ON L7N 2E7
Tel. (416) 634-3052 or J. Vanderhoek (416) 336-8032

Georgetown District Christian School
invites applications for the position of
PRINCIPAL
to commence August 1991. The applicant should have solid experience in education, good communication skills, vision for Christian Education and be an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

For further information please contact:
Arthur Loveless
Chairman of the Search Committee
R.R.#1, Limehouse, ON L0P 1H0
Phone: (416) 877-7595

Real Estate

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Sid Vandermeulen
Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.
Het vertrouwde adres.

Book review on page 20.

Help Wanted

Redeemer College
Ancaster, Ontario
L9G 3N6 (416) 648-2131

invites applications for the following faculty positions for 1991-92

Business (Marketing)
(sessional or tenure-track)

Psychology (Experimental)
(sessional)

Applicants should be committed to teaching and scholarship in accordance with the Reformed Christian basis of the college and should hold a minimum of a Master's degree; the doctoral degree is preferred.

Letters of application should be sent to:

Dr. Justin Cooper
Vice-President (Academic)
Redeemer College
Ancaster, ON L9G 3N6

Deadline: *December 31, 1990*

This advertisement is directed only toward Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Dordt College

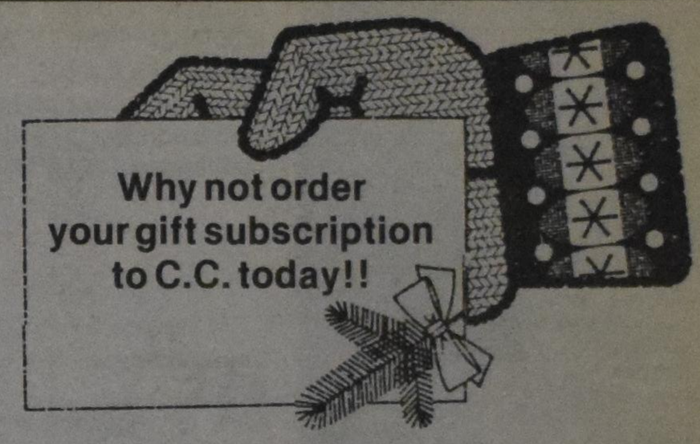
Admissions Office Openings

Positions involving recruitment contacts with prospective students and their parents are open for the 1991-92 academic year. Applicants must have strong marketing and interpersonal skills and a firm commitment to the mission of the college. Candidates demonstrating relevant work experience preferred.

Letters of application and resumes should be sent to:

Lyle A. Gritters
VP for College Advancement
Dordt College
Sioux Center, IA 51250

Dordt College complies with federal and state requirements for non-discrimination in employment. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.



Help Wanted

THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH
invites applications for

FOSTER (GROUP) HOME PARENTS

to operate a foster (group) home for up to six children.
This challenging position provides you with an opportunity to be part of a committed team of professionals meeting the needs of children who require a home away from home. The agency will provide support and training as well as a rate of $1,100 per month for each child in the home.

Qualifications preferred
Parent(s) experienced in fostering or working with teen and/or latency-aged children. Training in child care would be an asset.

If you are interested, please respond in writing to:

Placement Resources Unit
The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth
P.O. Box 1107, Station A, Hamilton, ON L8N 4B9
or contact Joan Crittenden at (416) 522-1121

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth

Events

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What's Your Perspective?

How does your Christian faith shape your perspective of your work, your community, society? At the **Institute for Christian Studies** our Reformed Christian perspective shapes our view of all of life. Discover how our *Master's Program in Worldview Studies* can help you shape and clarify your perspective. **Register now for next term.**

Worldview Foundations 1021 - *The environmental crisis and responsiveness of creation* The environmental crisis raises fundamental questions for the Christian community. This course will reflect on the responsiveness of creation within the context of present ecological realities.
Instructor: Brian J. Walsh
Mondays, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Technology Studies 1410 - *Living in a culture of technology: a reading-tutorial course* We live in a culture of technology and this course will take a look at this phenomenon.
Instructor: Robert Hudspith
Tutorials will be arranged with the instructor.

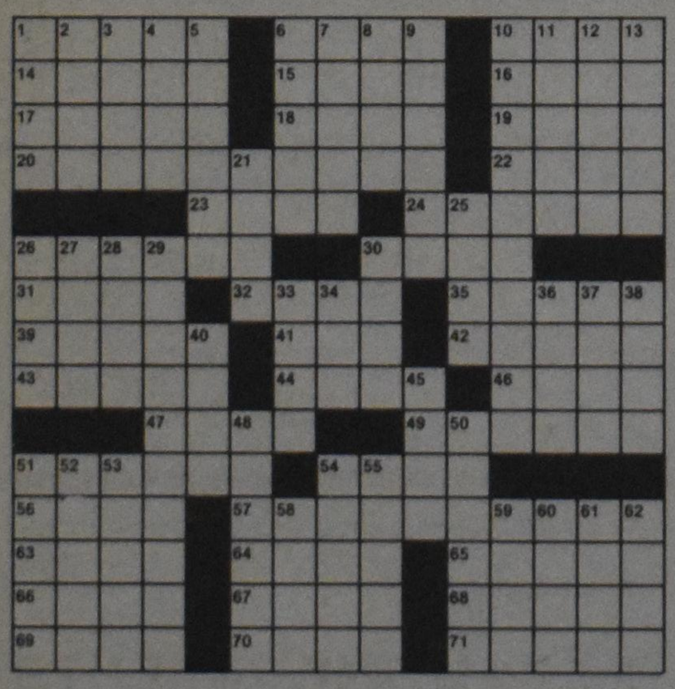
Other courses available in the Worldview Studies Program:
- ***The empowerment of self in community: issues in psychotherapy*** Instructors: Mary VanderVennen, Diane Marshall, James Olthuis - Tuesdays 7:00-10:00 p.m.
- ***Spirituality and the renewal of the church*** Instructor: George Vandervelde - Wednesdays 7:00-10:00
- ***The Bible and the second sex*** Instructor: Nik Ansell Mondays 7:00-10:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact:

Institute for Christian Studies
The graduate school with a difference

229 College St. Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4 (416) 979-2331

Weekly Puzzle by Louis Sabin



ACROSS
1 Relinquish
6 Soviet sea
10 Byway
14 Llama's home
15 Singer's syllables
16 Rose's wooer
17 Kick off
18 Chooses
19 Lawn sign
20 Nuts
22 At 5-5 e.g.
23 Amphibian
24 A Marcos
26 WY city
30 Flame
31 Concerning
32 Napoleon slept here
35 Goya hangs here
39 Pet line
41 Roman bronze
42 Circe
43 Skate
44 Base food
46 Bluish-white metal
47 Sticky stuff
49 Think
51 Entertain
54 Afr. fox
56 Cherub
57 Bug killers
63 Diner employee
64 "Garfield" dog
65 Come up
66 Gaelic
67 Go by hansom
68 Eng. poet of yore
69 Hennaed
70 Word with up or off
71 Inscribe

DOWN
1 Stinger
2 Opposed
3 Tarbell and Lupino
4 Green in Heraldry
5 Lands
6 Hilo howdy
7 Hasty
8 Counter-tenor
9 Movie canine
10 Treat milk
11 Bubbling
12 Did roof repair
13 Ibsen heroine
21 Heart
25 Atlas items
26 Unruffled
27 Cruising
28 Kenton or Getz
29 Cancelled in a way
30 Angler's catch
33 Metallic cloth
34 Get-together
36 Solo
37 Slight impression
38 Formerly
40 Greet
45 Juan's "of course!"
48 Class paper
50 Century segment
51 Sped
52 GA college
53 Silly one
54 Stage comment
55 Charger
58 Singer Adams
59 Press
60 Force
61 Laborer of old
62 Kin of a haruspex

Last Week's Puzzle

Calendar of Events

Dec. 1-7	Fall Advent concerts by the Adoramus-Maranatha Choir with the Excelsior Brass Band. Starts 8 p.m. **Dec. 1:** Faith CRC, **Burlington; Dec. 7:** Bethany CRC, **Fenwick,** Ont
Dec. 5	RCBPO breakfast meeting, 7:00 a.m., Holiday Inn, **Burlington,** Ont. Speaker Cam Jackson, MPP. Call (416) 524-1203.
Dec. 5-11	Dutch organist Herman van Vliet in concert. All concerts start at 8 p.m. **Dec. 5:** Free Reformed Church, **Chatham,** Ont.; **Dec. 6:** Simcoe St. United Church, **Oshawa,** Ont.; **Dec. 7:** Can. Ref. Church, **Beamsville,** Ont.; **Dec. 8:** First CRC, **Hamilton,** Ont.; **Dec. 11:** Maranatha Can. Ref. Church, **Fergus,** Ont.
Dec. 6	Celebration on the occasion of the retirement of Rev. and Mrs. Joosse, 7 p.m., Baptist Church Hall, **Kentville,** Nova Scotia.
Dec. 7/8	Exhibition of oil and watercolour paintings by David Bakker, Robert Fisher and John Pijl. **Dec. 7:** 6-9 p.m.; **Dec. 8:** 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. At Bakker Garden Centre, Martindale Rd., **St. Catharines,** Ont.
Dec. 8	Christmas concert — massed choir and organist Andre Knevel. At 7:30 p.m., Dundas Street Centre United Church, **London,** Ont. Free-will offering.
Dec. 9	Dutch service, led by Rev. H. De Moor Sr., 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster,** Ont.
Dec. 9	"Advent Wijdingsdienst," an evening of Dutch advent and Christmas music, with scripture readings, poetry, music for choir, brass ensemble, organ and communal singing. Musical direction Gerzinus Hoekstra. At 8 p.m., Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines,** Ont.
Dec. 11	RCBPO breakfast meeting, 7:30 a.m., Surf Restaurant, Brant St., **Burlington,** Ont. For reservations call (416) 524-1203.
Dec. 19	Christmas concert by the OCMA, Leendert Kooij director, with Andre Knevel at the organ. At 8 p.m., Rehoboth CRC, **Bowmanville,** Ont. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.
Dec. 22	Annual Christmas concert by St. Thomas Ladies' Choir "Gloria in Excelsis" and the St. Thomas & District Male Chorus "Crescendo." At 7:30 p.m., First United Church, St. George St., **St. Thomas,** Ont.
Dec. 22	Christmas concert by the OCMA, Leendert Kooij director, with Andre Knevel at the organ. At 8 p.m., Willowdale United Church, **Willowdale,** Ont. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.

Advent Wijdingsdienst

An evening of Dutch Advent and Christmas music, with scripture readings, poetry, music for choir, brass ensemble and organ. Lots of communal singing, all in the Dutch language!

MUSICAL DIRECTION:
Gerzinus Hoekstra
WHEN?
Sunday, Dec. 9, 1990, 8:00 p.m.
WHERE?
Covenant Chr. Ref. Church
278 Parnell Rd.
St. Catharines, Ont.
Come and sing along with us!!

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!
When you fax your display or classified ads to us (particulary obituaries), please type them and check spelling BEFORE you transmit the text.
Thank you.
ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

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C.C. 30/11/90

Provides your church with a quality Bible-based program for boys and girls from kindergarten to high school.

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170 Clarke Street, North
Woodstock, Ontario
Tel. (519) 537-6422

Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst
met medewerking van het Kerkkoor

Wij hopen D.V. twee diensten te houden:

Zondag, 2 december 1990, 7:30 n.m.
Zondag, 9 december 1990, 7:30 n.m.

Don't forget ... It's time to extend Christmas greetings through C.C.

Just a reminder that the deadline for season's greetings to appear in the Dec. 7 Christmas issue is Wednesday, Nov. 28. Every year subscribers to *Calvinist Contact* use the special classified section to extend their season's greetings to family and friends. Kindly enclose payment of $20 with your ad and send it in today. Forget the fuss of Christmas cards and postage stamps; one ad does it all.

Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A1

Fax your message to us!

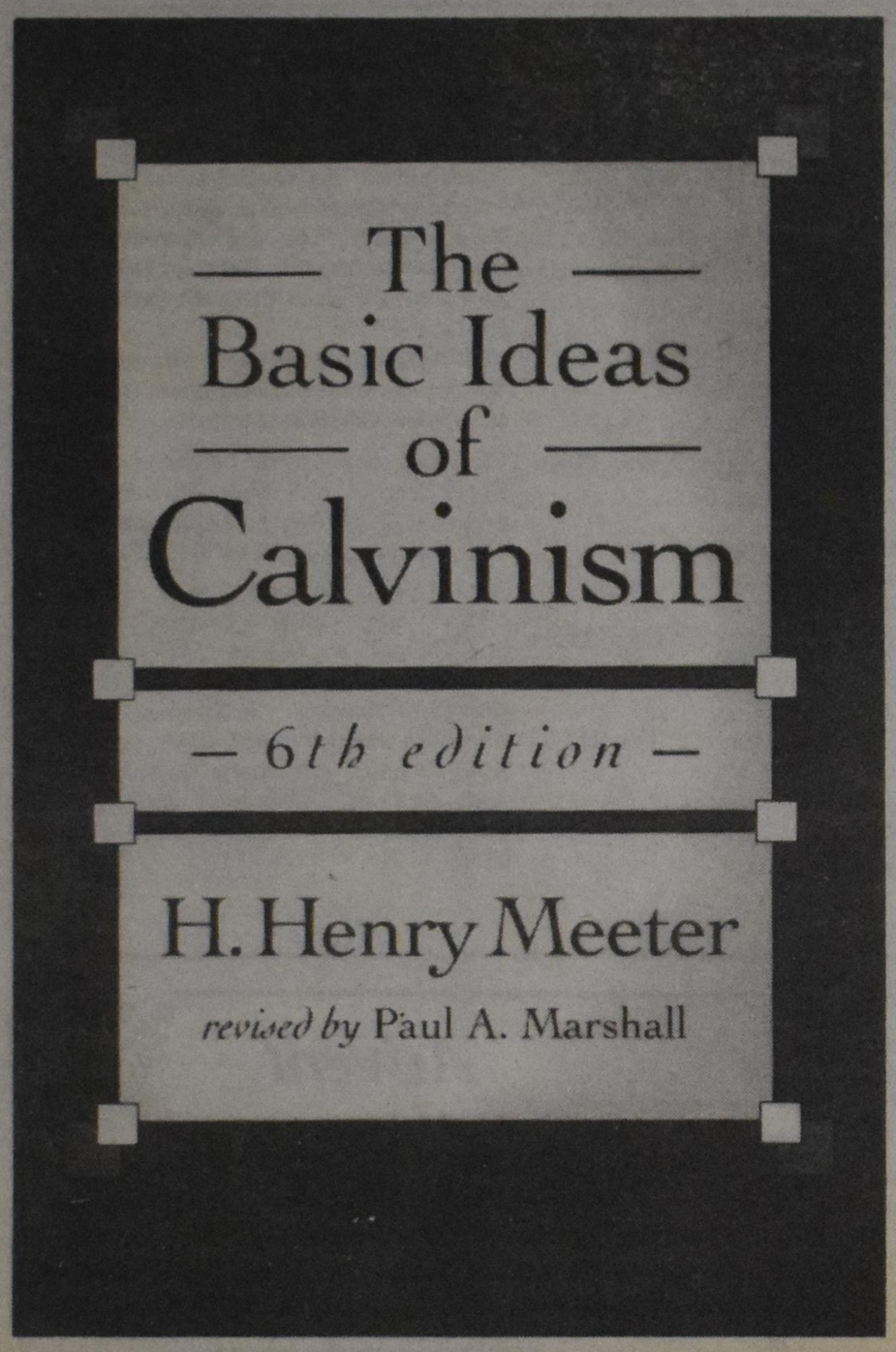
Our fax number:
(416) 682-8313

Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Christian belief

The heart of Calvinism



The Basic Ideas of Calvinism, by H. Henry Meeter, 6th edition, revised by Paul A. Marshall. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990. ISBN 0-8010-6269-1. Softcover, 221 pp., $16.95. Reviewed by Robert VanderVennen.

I was astonished to discover that this book is still alive, and that a new edition has been prepared with the help of my British-born co-worker Paul Marshall. The publisher tells us that the book in one version or another has been translated into four languages.

In 1948 I took Dr. Meeter's course on Calvinism at Calvin College, using the first edition of this book. My classmates and I found the course and the book to be somewhat less than exciting. But let's see what the book looks like now.

The first of the book's two parts, some 53 pages, deals in seven chapters with what is called "The Theological Ideas of Calvinism." Meeter looks for the central concept of Calvinism, and finds it in the idea of the sovereignty of God, the biblical belief that God is active in all aspects of reality, that all of life is religion. He elaborates that by dealing with the place in the Calvinistic system of the Bible and of faith, with Calvinism as a balanced system, with common grace and with human culture.

The rest of the book deals with the political ideas of Calvinism. This is why political scientist Marshall was asked to work with the text. Originally Meeter projected this book as the first of three volumes, the other two of which would deal with the application of Calvinism to other areas of life. He may have had in mind a multi-volume elaboration of Abraham Kuyper's *Stone Lectures.*

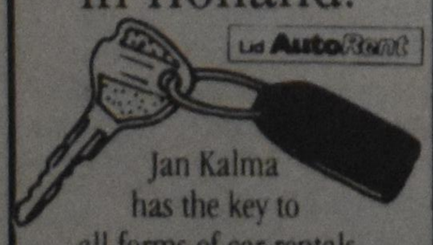
Meeter opens this part of the book with the statement, "The Bible offers eternal principles which should underlie and control all political systems." He discusses the forms of government, the task and authority of government, sphere sovereignty, the relation of church and state, international affairs and the issue of war.

Marshall's contribution is basically three new chapters which take a stab at updating a book on political ideas written half a century ago. He has added a chapter on "The Christian and Total War" in which he concludes that the use of nuclear weapons is illegitimate because it is so massive and undiscriminating. In a new chapter on Liberation Theology, Marshall describes what it is and identifies some strengths and weaknesses.

In the closing chapter Marshall asks what kind of attitude Christians should have today in the face of breathtaking international political developments. He says that Christians are called to be faithful but realistic, neither feeling that doom is about to descend nor that we can bring in utopia. He offers an encouraging outlook in what is largely an essay on biblically-rooted eschatology.

The strength of this book is its clear, simple presentation of what Calvinism is. It is a sort of "back to the basics" which can be helpful for newcomers and for Calvinists who have lost the focus. Although the publisher has done some good editing of the text, the book is clearly dated. It would perhaps have been better to write an entirely new book presenting the heart of Calvinism in an equally readable style. But occasionally a book will take on a life of its own, and this book seems to have gained international acceptance over the years. Its largest part, on politics, has been superseded by many excellent new books on Christianity and politics, including Marshall's own book *Thine Is the Kingdom.* Yet there is something attractive about the book's clear, simple style. An excellent bibliography for the book has been compiled by Peter De Klerk.

Want to rent a car while in Holland?



Jan Kalma has the key to all forms of car rentals.

Will deliver car to Amsterdam airport if desired.

jan kalma

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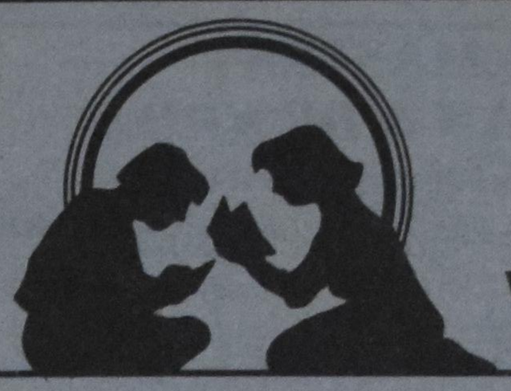
► Call for Students — Classis Chatham ◄

Any student from Classis Chatham who has applied to Calvin Seminary or its S.P.M.C. program for the purpose of full-time ministry in the CRC and who is in need of financial assistance for the coming academic year is asked to request application forms from the

Secretary Rev. Wieger DeJong
Box 190, West St. Straffordville, ON N0J 1Y0

The *completed* application form must be in the secretary's hands not later than February 16, 1991, *or the application will not be processed.* Also, *first-time applicants* should reserve the evening of March 4, 1991, for an interview with the Student Fund Committee.



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Finishing well

"Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come" (Ps. 71:18).

A student in Grade 3 once wrote this little piece in response to the teacher's question, "What Is a Grandmother?"

A grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own, so she likes other people's girls and boys. A grandfather is a man grandmother. He goes for walks with the boys and they talk about fishing and tractors and things like that. Grandmothers don't have anything to do but be there.

They're old, so they shouldn't play hard or run. It is enough if they drive you to the market where the pretend-house is and have lots of dinners ready, or if they take you for walks they should slow down past things like pretty leaves or caterpillars. They should never say, "Hurry up!"

Usually they are fat, but not too fat to tie kids' shoes. They wear glasses and funny underwear and they can take their teeth and gums off.

They don't have to be smart, only answer questions like why dogs hate cats, and howcome God isn't married. They don't talk baby-talk like visitors do because it is so hard to understand.

When they read to us, they don't skip pages or mind if it is the same story again. Everybody should have one, especially if you don't have television, because grandmas are the only grownups who have got time.

Beautiful, isn't it!

The final task

Last week we reflected on the "throw-away" attitude that our society seems sometimes to have toward those in their elderly years. But there is more in Psalm 71 about aging. The best of it comes in the verse 18, printed above.

After all the "youthful" and "energetic" things have been completed in my life, says the psalmist, give me opportunity to do the last and best thing that I need to do. Allow me to tell the next generation about the meaning of life! Give me strength to share with my children and grandchildren the wonders of your love and the beauty of your grace! Make it possible for me to pass along the sense of awe that comes to those who know the limitlessness of your power!

As I write these words, my friend's father is dying. A couple days ago my friend said good-bye to his dad for the last time. And in that good-bye was the most profound sense of accomplishment that either of them experienced in their long relationship. It had all been said before, of course, either in words or deeds, often in the unreflective and unplanned daily routines of life. But now it was said verbally. In summary, with forethought; distinctly, with intention.

What was said? Some things about God, some things about life, some things about the church, some things about faith.

They were private things, but they belong, in a sense, to the whole of the next generation. In fact, my friend's father said as much: "Tell your sons, my grandsons ...."

Rest in peace

Now he dies. But his life ends with the fulfilment that the psalmist prayed for in these verses. Frederick Buechner once wrote that the "very young children" and the "very old children" of our world have much in common. They have the advantage of sitting on the sidelines, he said, of leaning back and putting up their feet and appreciating what life is all about.

Perhaps that's why Robert Browning's lines are such a favourite with those who close their pilgrimage glowing with what Buechner called the "inner goldenness" of God's love:

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life,
For which the first was made;
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth show but half; trust God:
See all nor be afraid!"

Everyone should have a grandparent like that!

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.